# The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History

## Between China and the Islamic World

MICHAL BIRAN

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*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521842266

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First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

ISBN-13-978-0-521-84226-6 hardback
ISBN-10-0-521-84226-3 hardback

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For Yotam and Itamar

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# Acknowledgments

Anybody wandering in the Eurasian steppes, between China and the Islamic world, could not have completed the journey without the help of many qualified people. I would like first to express my deep gratitude to Professors Michael Zand (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Elizabeth Endicott (Middlebury, Vermont) for the time and knowledge with which they enriched this book. Certainly the crystal-clear logic of Professor Zand and Professor Endicott's strong common sense contributed significantly to the final shape of this work. A huge thank you is also due to my teacher, colleague and friend, Professor Reuven Amitai, who closely accompanied this project from its initial stages to its completion, and who read and reread my never-ending drafts. I'm indebted to Professor Irene Eber, both for the basics of my sinological education, and for her valuable comments on an earlier draft. Another special debt is to my colleague and friend, Dr. Yuri Pines, not only for his shrewd advice throughout the years, but also for functioning as my second eyes and ears in China and along the Silk Road. I would also like to thank the late Professor David Ayalon, who always encouraged me to dive deeper into Steppe history.

Thanks goes also to Professors Peter K. Bol, Nicola Di Cosmo, Beatrice F. Manz and Wheeler M. Thackston, for making my year at Harvard in 1995–6, where the research for the study began, such a worthwhile experience. I am also indebted to Professor Herbert Franke (Munich) for his sound advice throughout the years, to Professor Wei Liangtao (Nanjing, China), who kindly gave me his own books on the Western Liao, to Professor Liu Yingsheng (Nanjing, China) for his useful comments, and to Professor Yuri Bregel who introduced me to the magnificent manuscript collection of the Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University (Bloomington). I am also grateful to the members of the research group on the Interaction of Nomadic Rulers with Sedentary Peoples: Turco-Mongolian Nomads in China and in the Middle East (1000–1500AD), that Reuven Amitai and I organized at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem in spring 2000, notably to Peter Jackson, Anatoly Khazanov and David Morgan for their useful comments and warm encouragements. My debt to David Morgan goes much further, both for the professional editorial advice he kindly provided me with, and, even more, for introducing the manuscript to the publisher.





Most of the revision of this study was done in 2001–2 while I was a member at the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. I would like to thank the Institute's Director and staff and the members of the School of Historical Studies, especially Patricia Crone and Joshua Fogel, who enabled me to spend a wonderful year in the IAS nurturing atmosphere, and to Tom Allsen and Peter Golden for their good companionship during this year. In addition, I thank Patricia Crone and Peter Golden for reading and commenting on certain chapters of this study. One of my greatest debts is to Tom Allsen, who read through the whole manuscript (some parts more than once), giving me many comments and suggestions with his unmatched erudition, eloquence and good humor.

I am grateful to Tamar Sofer, who produced three maps, and to Cambridge University Press for its permission to use one of the maps, which originally appeared in volume VI of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge, 1994). Thanks are also due to Professor Joseph Patrich and Dr. Yuri Pines for their permission to use their photos from Central Asia and to Oded Bin-Nun for technical help. I would also like to thank my *tongxue* in Jerusalem, especially Ayal Donenfeld, Nimrod Luz, Gideon Shelach, Nurit Stadler, Eliyahu Stern and Vardit Tokatli, for years of inspiring coffee breaks and other kinds of support. Needless to say, despite the help of so many qualified people, and many others I could not have enumerated, I alone am responsible for any mistakes or shortcomings contained in this study.

I am grateful to the staff of the following institutions for assisting my research: the Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem); the Harvard Yenching Library, the Widenner Library and the Tozzer Library (Cambridge USA); the Library of the Research Institute for Central and Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University (Bloomington); the Gest Library and the Firestone Library (Princeton); the Institute for Advanced Study's Library (Princeton); the Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, the British Library; Nanjing University's Library; Nankai University's Library (Tianjin, PRC) and Beijing University's Library.

I would also like to thank the following bodies who assisted in the financing of the research and writing of this study: the Council for Higher Education in Israel; the Rothschild Foundation; the Fulbright Foundation; the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; the Central Research Fund, Hebrew University; the Israel Science Foundation (grant 818/03). It is also a pleasure to thank the staff at Cambridge University Press, especially the series editor, Marigold Acland, and my copy-editor, Mary Starkey, for their highly professional work as well as for their patience and good grace.

Lastly, in many ways the completion of this study required a multi-generational effort. I would therefore like to warmly thank my parents, Niztkhia and Uzi Pumpian, who covered for me more than a thousand and one times, and my sons, Yotam and Itamar, who willy-nilly accepted the Qara Khitai as another family member, sometimes a rather demanding one.

## Note on dates and transliterations

Dates are generally given according to the Gregorian calendar. *Hijri* and Chinese dates are given only when they have a specific importance to the study.

Chinese names and terms have been transliterated according to the Pinyin system.

Arabic words, titles and names have been transliterated according to the system used in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Words and names of Persian origin have usually been transliterated as if they were Arabic (e.g., Juwaynī, not Juvaynī, *nāmah*, not *nāme*). Common words and place names, such as Sultan, mamluk, Bukhara, Baghdad, are written without diacritical points. Well-known place names are given in their accepted English forms, e.g., Kashgar, Jerusalem.

Russian has been transliterated according to the system of the Library of Congress, except for the letter й, which is rendered as j.

Names and terms of Mongolian origin have been transliterated according to Antoine Mostaert's scheme as modified by F. W. Cleaves except for these deviations: č is rendered as ch; š as sh; ğ is gh and ǰ is j.

Names and terms of Turkic origin have been transliterated either according to their reconstruction in Dankoff's translation of Kāshgharī's *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* or in Boyle's translation of Juwaynī.

An asterisk (*) to the left of a name represents an uncertain transliteration.



## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *AEMA* | *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* |
| "Alfī" | Tattawī, Aḥmad, et al., "Ta'rīkh-i alfī." MS I.O. 3291, vol. III |
| *AO* | *Arkheologicheskie otkrytiia* |
| Barthold, *Turkestan* | V. V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*. 4th ed., London, 1968 |
| Barthold, *Turkestan-texts* | V. V. Barthold, comp., *Turkestan v epokhu 'mongol'skogo nashestiva*. Vol. I (texts), St. Petersburg, 1900 |
| *BSJ* | Liu Yu, *Bei shi ji*. In Wang Guowei, ed. "Gu xingji si zhong jiaolu," in *Wang Guowei yi shu*. Vol. 13, Shanghai, 1983 |
| *CAJ* | *Central Asiatic Journal* |
| *Chang Chun* | Li Zhichang, *Chang Chun xi you ji*, ed. Wang Guowei, in *Wang Guowei yi shu*. Vol. 13, Shanghai, 1983 |
| *CHC6* | D. Twitchett and H. Franke, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States 907–1368*. Cambridge, 1994 |
| *CHEIA* | D. Sinor, ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*. Cambridge, 1990 |
| *CHI5* | J. A. Boyle, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*. Cambridge, 1968 |
| *CSJC* | *Congshu jicheng* |
| *DJGZ* | Yuwen Mouzhao, *Da Jin guo zhi*. Np, 1937 |
| *EI1* | *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1st edition |
| *EI2* | *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition |
| *EIr* | *Encyclopedia Iranica* |
| *EV* | *Epigrafika vostoka* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ḥaydarī/Schefer | Ḥusaynī Rāzī Mīr Ḥaydar b. ʿAlī, *Taʾrīkh-i Ḥaydarī*, in C. Schefer, ed., *Description de Boukhara par Nerchakhy*. Paris, 1892, pp. 231–43 |
| *HCCA4* | M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, eds., *History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Vol. IV: The Age of Achievements: 750 AD to the End of the Fifteenth Century. Part One: The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*. Paris, 1998 |
| *HJAS* | *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* |
| Ibn al-Athīr | Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-taʾrīkh*. Beirut, 1966, 13 vols. |
| *In the Service of the Khan* | I. de Rachewiltz et al., eds. *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol–Yuan Period*. Wiesbaden, 1993 |
| *JA* | *Journal Asiatique* |
| *JCS* | He Junzhe et al., *Jin chao shi*. Beijing, 1992 |
| *JESHO* | *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* |
| *JRAS* | *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* |
| *JS* | Tuotuo. *Jin shi*. Beijing, 1975, 8 vols. |
| Juwaynī | Juwaynī, *Taʾrīkh-i Jahān-Gushā*, ed. M. M. Qazwīnī. London, 1912–37, 3 vols. |
| Juwaynī, tr. Boyle | Juwaynī, *The History of the World Conqueror*, tr. J. A. Boyle. Manchester, 1997 |
| Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī | Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. ʿA. Ḥabībī. Kabul, 1963–5, 2 vols. |
| Jūzjānī/Lees | Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. W. Nassau Lees. Calcutta, 1864 |
| *JY* | Li Xinchuan. *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*. Beijing, 1988, 4 vols. |
| JZA 1984 | Ji Zongan, "Taolun Yelü Dashi xiqian de yuanyin," *Xibei shidi* 1984/4: 41–9 |
| JZA 1987 | Ji Zongan, "Yelü Dashi xi xing ji lue," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao* 1987/2: 47–54 |
| JZA 1994 | Ji Zongan, "Guanyu Yelü Dashi he Xi Liao jian guo shiqi de ji ge wenti," *Zhongguo gudai shi* 1994/2: 29–36 |
| JZA 1996 | Ji Zongan, *Xi Liao shi lun: Yelü Dashi yanjiu*. Urumchi, 1996 |
| *LJSL* | Liu Pujiang, *Liao Jin shi lun*. Liaoning, 1999 |
| *LS* | Tuotuo. *Liao shi*. Beijing, 1974, 5 vols. |
| *LSG* | Shu Fen. *Liao shi gao*. Hubei, 1984 |
| *LSHB* | Yang Jialuo, ed. *Liaoshi huibian*. Taibei, 1973, 10 vols. |



| | |
|---|---|
| *LYD* | Liang Yuandong. *Xi Liao shi*. Beijing, 1955 |
| *Majmaʿ al-ansāb* | Shabānkāraʾī, *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, ed. M. H. Muḥaddith. Tehran, 1984 |
| Marwazī/Minorsky | Marwazī, *Ṭabāʾiʿ al-ḥayawān (Sharaf al-Zamān Ẓāhir Marvazī on China, Turks and India)*, ed. and tr. V. Minorsky. London, 1942 |
| *MIAS* | *Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologi SSSR* |
| PH | Anonymous, *Histoire des campagnes de Genghis Khan*, ed. and tr. P. Pelliot and L. Hambis, Vol. I. Leiden, 1951 |
| *QDGZ* | Ye Longli. *Qidan guo zhi*. Shanghai, 1985 |
| Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah | Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, ed. A. A. ʿAlīzādah. Vol. 1, Moscow, 1953 |
| Rashīd/Karīmī | Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*. Ed. B. Karīmī. Tehran, 1959, 2 vols. |
| Rashīd/Khwārazm | Rashīd al-Dīn, "Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh." MS BM Or 1684 |
| Rashīd/*Saljūq* | Rashīd al-Dīn, *Dhikr taʾrīkh Āl Selchūk (Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, Vol. 2 Part 5)*, ed. A. Atesh. Ankara, 1960 |
| *SBCG* | *Sibu Conggan* |
| *SC* | Xu Mengxin, *San chao bei meng hui bian*. Shanghai, 1987, 2 vols. |
| *SH* | F. W. Cleaves, tr., *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Cambridge, MA, 1982 |
| *SHdR* | I. de Rachewiltz, tr. and annot., *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*. Leiden, 2004, 2 vols. |
| *SHY* | Xu Song, comp., *Song hui yao ji qiao*. Vols. 7, 8, Shanghai, 1957 |
| *SKQS* | *Siku Quanshu* |
| *SMJW* | Hong Hao, *Song mo ji wen*, ed. Zhang Bo. *Liaohai congshu* ed. |
| *SS* | Tuotuo. *Song shi*. Beijing, 1977, 40 vols. |
| *SWQZL* | Anonymous, *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, ed. Wang Guowei, in *Wang Guowei yi shu*. Vol. 13, Shanghai, 1983 |
| *VDI* | *Vestnik drevnei istorii* |
| WF | K. A Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1125)*. Philadelphia, 1949 |
| *XLSG* | Wei Liangtao, *Xi Liao shi gao*. Beijing, 1991 |
| *XLSYJ* | Wei Liangtao, *Xi Liao shi yanjiu*. Ningxia, 1987 |
| *XXJ* | Dai Xizhang, comp., *Xi Xia ji*. Yinchuan, 1988 |
| *XXSS* | Wu Guangcheng, *Xi Xia shu shi*. Taibei, 1968 |

| | |
|---|---|
| YLCC-*XYL* | Yelü Chucai, "The Hsi-yu lü by Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai," tr. I. de Rachewiltz, *Monumenta Serica* 21 (1962): 1–128 |
| YLCC-*ZR* | Yelü Chucai, *Zhan ran jushi wenji*, ed. Xie Fang. Beijing, 1986 |
| *YS* | Song Lian, *Yuan shi*. Beijing, 1976, 15 vols. |
| *ZK* | G. G. Pikov, *Zapadnye Kidani*. Novosibirsk, 1989 |

# Introduction

The early twelfth century was a time of turmoil in both China and Central Asia.[1] In north China the Khitan Liao dynasty that had ruled Manchuria, Mongolia and parts of north China for more than 200 years (907–1125) was overthrown by a new wave of Manchurian invaders, the Jurchens, who established the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). Under these circumstances, one Khitan prince, Yelü Dashi (1087–1143), chose not to submit to the Jurchen conquerors. Instead, he led his few adherents westward, hoping to return subsequently to restore the Liao dynasty in its former domains. After six years in western Mongolia, Dashi recognized his inability to challenge the Jurchen Jin dynasty, and, becoming aware of the relative weakness of the Central Asian kingdoms, he decided to seek a political future further to the west. In a little more than a decade he successfully fashioned a new empire in Central Asia that was known to the Muslims as the Qara Khitai (the Black Khitans) and to China as the Xi Liao (Western Liao).[2]

After completing their conquests in 1141, the Qara Khitai empire ruled the area roughly between the Oxus river in the west and the Altai mountains in the east, i.e., a territory equivalent to the larger part of modern Xinjiang, Qyrghyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and south Qazaqstan. Dashi and his successors bore the Inner Asian title Gürkhan (*Geerhan*, universal khan), but were also designated as Chinese emperors. The empire existed for nearly ninety years, and was finally vanquished by the Mongols in 1218.

The Qara Khitai period is one of the least known in the history of Central Asia, yet it is also one of the most fascinating periods: The Qara Khitai dynasty is the only Central Asian dynasty to have been considered a legitimate Chinese dynasty by Chinese official historiography. As they ruled over a mostly Muslim population, the history of the Qara Khitai provides a unique window on the extensive cross-cultural contacts between China, Inner Asian nomads and the Muslim world, and permits an assessment of the relative appeal of Chinese and Muslim cultures for the

[1] The term Central Asia in this study refers to the area between the Oxus and the eastern border of modern Xinjiang. Inner Asia denotes the broader region stretching from Manchuria to the Caspian sea including Mongolia, south Siberia and Central Asia.

[2] The terms Qara Khitai and Western Liao are used throughout the book as complete synonyms; for the different names of the dynasty see appendix 1.

Inner Asian nomads. Moreover, since the Qara Khitai ruled over Central Asia in the period that immediately preceded the rise of Chinggis Khan, a better understanding of the Qara Khitai period can provide further insights into the nature of the Mongol empire. It can also reexamine the claim, raised first in the nineteenth century but never fully developed, that the Qara Khitai empire was the prototype of the empire established by Chinggis Khan.[3]

This study is divided into two parts, each consisting of three chapters. The first part provides a fuller narrative history for the Qara Khitai, firmly locating them in their complex historical context between the worlds of Islam and China on the eve of the Mongol invasion. The chronological framework chosen for this purpose is wide: it begins in 1124, when Yelü Dashi left for Mongolia, enthroning himself merely as a king, not yet as an emperor (which he did in 1131/2), and ending in 1218, when the Mongols eliminated the Naiman prince Güchülüg, who seized the Qara Khitai throne, rather than in 1211 when Güchülüg deposed the last Gürkhan, Zhilugu, or in 1213 at Zhilugu's death. Güchülüg's reign is a peculiar period in Qara Khitai history: his ethnic origin and policies were so different from those of the former Gürkhans that, despite his attempts to revive the fortunes of the empire, his contemporaries in China and in the Muslim world never regarded him as a legitimate Qara Khitai ruler.[4] Yet the polity over which he ruled was still called the Western Liao, and I therefore decided to document its history down to its final dissolution in 1218.

The second part examines the main components of the multicultural milieu found within the Qara Khitai realm: the Chinese; the nomadic or Inner Asian; and the Islamic. This is organized around three questions, not hitherto addressed in the literature: Why did the Qara Khitai retain their Chinese characteristics in the new Central Asian environment? How did these "infidel" nomadic rulers acquire legitimization among their mostly Muslim sedentary population? And why, unlike their predecessors and successors in Central Asia, did they not embrace Islam? In trying to find answers to these questions certain Qara Khitai institutions, principally their administrative, army and religious policies, are described in detail, while aspects of economic and social history are also touched upon.

This close examination of Qara Khitai history and institutions permits a preliminary evaluation of Qara Khitai influences on the Mongol empire, a theme dealt with in the conclusion.

## Methodological problems, sources and previous scholarship

Despite the uniqueness and importance of the Qara Khitai empire, research about it is relatively meager, and has generally not been undertaken by scholars with

[3] H. H. Howorth, "The Northern Frontiers of China Part III: The Kara Khitai," *JRAS* 8 (1876), 262–90; P. D. Buell, "Sino-Khitan Administration in Mongol Bukhara," *Journal of Asian History* 13 (1979), 121–51; and, less categorically, D. O. Morgan, "Who Ran the Mongol Empire?" *JRAS* (1982/2), 124–36.

[4] See pp. 80–6.



direct access to the entire range of sources. This is mainly due to the character of the sources for the study of the Qara Khitai.

Except for the chronicle in chapter 30 of the official history of the Liao dynasty, the *Liao shi*, a rather problematic text (about which see below), there are no sources compiled by historians of the dynasty itself and only a few, none of them strictly chronicles, that were written under its vassals. The study of Qara Khitai history is therefore mainly based on what its eastern and western neighbors chose to mention about it. These reports, nearly always fragmentary and often contradictory, are scattered mainly among Chinese, Arabic and Persian sources. Moreover, even after completing the painstaking work of collecting the scattered accounts and combining different historiographical traditions, several problems remain apparent.

First, the amount of information at our disposal is not evenly divided, in terms of either time or space. While Chinese sources supply relatively ample information on Yelü Dashi's early career and on his formative years in Mongolia, and Muslim sources describe in greater detail the fall of the Qara Khitai, the middle period of the Qara Khitai is only partially covered by either of these sources, leaving many lacunas. In spatial terms, we know much more about the situation in the Qara Khitai western territories, mainly Transoxania,[5] than about the situation in the central territory of the Qara Khitai or on their eastern border. Many intriguing details regarding the relations of the Qara Khitai with the Mongols, therefore, remain unknown.

Second, the number of contradictions contained in the sources is unusually large.[6] These are apparent not only when juxtaposing eastern and western information but also within each category of sources: Juwaynī, a major Muslim source, presents two contradictory versions of the fall of the Qara Khitai, and details in the chronicle of the Qara Khitai in the *Liao shi* are challenged by inconsistent evidence from other of its chapters as well as by other Chinese (and Muslim) works.

Third, a considerable part of what we know about the Qara Khitai derives from people foreign to them, who did not always understand their background. Thus, for example, the Chinese fashion of calling the ruler and his officials not by their first names but by their titles confused Muslim historians. An experienced historian, Rashīd al-Dīn, recounted that the same Gürkhan ruled from the death of Yelü Dashi (1143) until the rise of Güchülüg (1211), ascribing a considerable part of Güchülüg's success to the Gürkhan's aging, a marginal factor at best.[7]

Due to these limitations, the resulting history is less unequivocal than the political and institutional histories of other regions and periods, and more than once my notes refer to an alternative reconstruction of the events. Yet, systematic and

[5] The term Transoxania in this study refers to the region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, excluding the upper reaches of the Oxus, which belonged to Khwārazm.

[6] In the words of Pelliot: "The history of the Qara Khitai . . . is crammed with uncertainties and contradictions which come to one's notice as soon as he tries to make sure of a fact, a name or a date." P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris, 1959), 1:221.

[7] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:236.

comparative reading in a large variety of contemporary and later works partially compensates for the sources' deficiencies and results in a meaningful picture of Qara Khitai political and institutional history.

Of the many works consulted, only a few important ones and some principal genres can be described below.[8]

*Chinese sources*

The basic source for Qara Khitai history is the chronicle of the Western Liao included in chapter 30 of the *Liao shi*, which reviews the political history of the Qara Khitai from the early rise of Yelü Dashi to Güchülüg's usurpation.[9] The *Liao shi* itself is ranked very low in comparison with other Chinese official histories, due to the irregular record keeping of the nomadic Khitans and the unusually long time that passed from the end of the Liao (1125) to the compilation of its history in 1344–5.[10] As early as the Qing period (1644–1911) scholars complained that it was marred by both internal and external contradictions.[11] But apart from these general deficiencies, the Western Liao chronicle suffers from unique problems of its own, namely the unattested source of its information[12] and chronological inconsistencies, which become apparent when it is compared with the relevant Muslim sources.[13] Those reasons led Pelliot to describe the *Liao shi* 30 as a romanticized biography of Yelü Dashi.[14] The content of the chronicle, however, is far from romantic. A considerable part of it is dedicated to administrative

[8] Full references for the sources mentioned below appear in the bibliography. For earlier reviews of Qara Khitai sources see *XLSYJ*, 1–25; *ZK*, 1–52; and the relevant items in Barthold, *Turkestan*, 1–58.

[9] *LS*, 30/355–8.

[10] The Chinese official history of a dynasty was usually written by the subsequent dynasty on the basis of the daily records of the vanquished dynasty. The Liao dynastic history, however, was compiled only in 1344–5, more than two centuries after the Liao had come to an end, after the Mongol Yuan rulers had finally decided to accord it legitimate status in the succession of Chinese dynasties (H. L. Chan, "Chinese Official Historiography at the Yuan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin and Sung Histories," in J. D. Langlois [ed.], *China under Mongol Rule* [Princeton, 1981], 56–106).

[11] Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," in *CHC6*, 667–8; for a recent reappraisal, see Li Xihou, "*Liao shi* yu *Liao shi* yanjiu," *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* 1995/5, 63–73, and see below.

[12] The *Liao shi* is based on three earlier compilations: 1. Liao's *Veritable Records* (*shi lu*), compiled under Yelü Yan in 1103; 2. an incomplete Liao history presented to the Jin throne by Chen Daren in 1207, which was reworked in the Jin office of history on the basis of an 1148 compilation, based on the remaining Liao records; 3. the still-extant *Qidan guo zhi* ("History of the Khitan state"), a Song unofficial history of the Liao compiled around 1247 in which Ye Longli, a Southern Song scholar, reviewed Liao history on the basis of Song written materials and from a Chinese viewpoint. (Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 667–8). None of these compilations contained all the information included in the *LS* 30 regarding the Qara Khitai. (*XLSYJ*, 1–2).

[13] The most obvious example is the date of Yelü Dashi's enthronement. According to the *LS* 30, Yelü Dashi was enthroned in the year *jiachen*, 1124, *after* he had defeated the Muslim *Huersan*, i.e., the ruler of Khurāsān, Sultan Sanjar. This reference recalls the famous battle of Qatwān which, according to the detailed accounts of the Muslim chronicles, took place only in 1141 (see pp. 41–5. For further examples see *ZK*, 13–17).

[14] Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:223–4.



measures: nominations and titles, so characteristic of Chinese history; and even census results are given. This kind of information strongly suggests that the chronicle was at least partially based on some surviving written documents. What those documents were like; where they originated; how and where they were preserved in the more than hundred years that elapsed from the fall of the Qara Khitai to the compilation of the *Liao shi*; how and why their chronological framework was corrupted – all these questions are at the moment unanswerable.

Apart from the *Liao shi*, other official histories, those of the Jin and, to a lesser extent, those of the Yuan and Song are also major sources for the history of the Qara Khitai. Of great importance are also the unofficial histories written under the Song. First among these is the *San chao bei meng hui bian* ("Compilation of documents on the treaties with the North during three reigns") by Xu Mengxin (1126–1207). This book collects extracts from 196 contemporary works (e.g., diaries, memorials, letters, all preserved in their original form) and narrates with many details, sometimes even day after day, the fall of the Northern Song and its alliance and war with the Jin from 1117 to 1161, a period that corresponds to the reigns of three successive Song emperors.[15] The work contains many details regarding Yelü Dashi's early career in China, his departure for Mongolia, and his attempts to forge alliances with the Song and Xi Xia.

Other important unofficial histories include the *Qidan guo zhi*, one of the major sources for the *Liao shi*;[16] Yuwen Mozhao's *Da Jin guo zhi* ("History of the great Jin kingdom"), written around 1234, which narrates the history of the Jin from the Song point of view;[17] and the *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* ("A Record of important affairs since the beginning of the *Jianyan* [1127–30] period") by Li Xinchuan (1166–1243), an annalistic work that covers the 1126–63 period. Among other topics, this work offers a most detailed description of Yelü Yudu's campaign against Yelü Dashi in the 1130s and of Jin and Song reactions to Dashi's strengthening at Kedun.[18]

Other significant genres of Chinese sources include literary collections (*wenji*) by Song and Jin scholars and official documents (e.g., the *Song hui yao*). Of special importance are the travelogues, mainly reports of envoys sent from one Chinese state to the other or from Jin or Song to the Mongols. The *Song mo ji wen* ("Record of hearsay on the pine forest in the plains"), for example, records the personal experience of Hong Hao (1088–1155). Hong was a Song envoy to the Jin who was detained by the Jurchens from 1129 to 1143.[19] His work contains unique

[15] Y. Hervouet (ed.), *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong, 1978), 86–7; see also Zhong Weimin, "*San chao bei meng hui bian*," in Cang Xiuliang (ed.), *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu pingjie* (Jinan, 1990), 2:57–78; Liu Pujiang, "*San chao bei meng hui bian* yanjiu," in *LJSL*, 373–401.

[16] Hervouet (ed.), *Sung Bibliography*, 90; for more on this work see Liu Pujiang, "*Qidan guo zhi* de ruogan wenti," in *LJSL*, 322–34.

[17] Hervouet (ed.), *Sung Bibliography*, 90–1; and see Liu Pujiang, "Zai lun *Da Jin guo zhi* de zhenwei," in *LJSL*, 335–56.

[18] Hervouet (ed.), *Sung Bibliography*, 81; see also Wu Huaiqi, "*Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*," in Cang Xiuliang (ed.), *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu pingjie*, 2:79–94.

[19] Hervouet (ed.), *Sung Bibliography*, 109–10.

information about Yelü Dashi's capture by the Jin in 1123 and his subsequent escape.

Other relevant travelogues narrate the journeys of Chinese envoys or visitors to the Mongols, most of whom went to see Chinggis Khan during his stay in Transoxania in the early 1220s. As their authors passed through the Western Liao territory soon after its dissolution, most of them retain some reference to its history. The two most important travelogues are those of Chang Chun and Yelü Chucai. Chang Chun (1148–1227), the patriarch of the Daoist Quanzhen sect who was summoned by Chinggis Khan due to his erudition in the science of elixirs, set out for Central Asia in 1220. He met the Mongol Khan at Samarqand in 1222, and came back to north China in 1224. The record of his journey contains several references to Qara Khitai history as well as a vivid description of the lands formerly under their rule.[20] Yelü Chucai (1189–1243), later the famous councilor of Chinggis Khan and his son Ögödei, and himself a descendant of the Khitan royal family, was naturally interested in Qara Khitai history. Accompanying Chinggis Khan in his campaign against Khwārazm in 1219 and remaining in Central Asia until 1226, Yelü Chucai visited most of the former Qara Khitai territories. His *Xi you lu* ("Account of a journey to the west"), and many poems in his literary collection, preserve unique details about Qara Khitai administration and language, as well as about the economic situation in their former regions.[21]

Apart from contemporary or nearly contemporary works, important later Chinese compilations, mainly from the Qing period, were also consulted. Qing historians, aware of the inadequacy of the *Liao shi*, accumulated materials from other Song, Jin and Yuan works and tried to eliminate the inconsistencies of the *Liao shi*. While their results for Liao history are impressive, the treatment of the Western Liao is less successful. Important Qing works are the *Liao shi shi yi* ("Supplement to the *Liao shi*") of Li E (1692–1752); the *Liao shi shi yi bu* ("Addendum to the Supplement to the *Liao shi*") of Yang Fuji (1727–1820), the richest work with regard to the Qara Khitai; and the *Liao shi ji shi benmo* ("The complete history of the Liao") of Li Yutang (1843–1902), who mainly rearranged his predecessors' work in topical order. None of those records, however, used non-Chinese sources for reconstructing Qara Khitai history, and they are cited in this study only when their information adds to more contemporary sources. Also important are later compilations for the history of the Xi Xia, the Western Liao's southeastern neighbor. Those include mainly Wu Guangzheng's *Xi Xia shu shi* ("Historical record of the Xi Xia"), completed in 1825–7, and the *Xi Xia ji* ("Record of the Xi Xia") of Tai Xichang, completed in 1927, an annalistically arranged work whose compiler carefully identifies his (mainly Song, Liao and Jin) sources.[22] The Tangut codex of 1148–69, available in both Chinese and Russian translations, provides important

[20] On Chang Chun see I. de Rachewiltz and T. Russell, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi," in *In the Service of the Khan*, 208–23.

[21] On Yelü Chucai see I. de Rachewiltz, "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang," in *In the Service of the Khan*, 136–75.

[22] R. W. Dunnell, "The Hsi-Hsia," in *CHC6*, 675.



indirect information on Qara Khitai trade.[23] Although I have checked most of the existing indices for Liao, Song and Yuan works, very few new Chinese sources can be added to the meticulous work by Wittfogel and Feng and by modern Chinese scholars.

*Muslim sources*

This study uses a large variety of Muslim sources, some of them hitherto not consulted with regard to the Qara Khitai. Yet the major works remain the chronicles of Juwaynī (d. 1283 in Baghdad), Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233 in Mawṣil), and Jūzjānī (d. after 1265 in Delhi). As in the case of the *Liao shi*, however, the sources for the information on the Qara Khitai in these three major Muslim works are not always clear.

Juwaynī, an administrator in the service of the Mongols, is by far the most knowledgeable Muslim source on the Qara Khitai. Still, his existing record ignores their most remarkable victory, that over the Saljūqs at Qatwān in 1141, and, as mentioned above, includes two contradictory versions of their fall.[24] The only work Juwaynī mentions as a source for his information on the Qara Khitai is the *Mashārib al-tajārib wa ghawārib al-gharā'ib* ("Places of refreshment of the experiences and zeniths of the marvels"), of Ibn Funduq, a lost history of Khurāsān. The same book is quoted also by Ibn al-Athīr, although in both cases the writers refer to information for the years 1172–89, while Ibn Funduq himself supposedly died in 1169.[25] The surviving works of Ibn Funduq which I have consulted hardly mention the Qara Khitai.[26]

Ibn al-Athīr's great annalistic work, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rīkh* ("The complete history"), includes unique information about the consolidation of Qara Khitai rule in the Muslim world as well as a detailed description of their fall, which happened during his lifetime. Apart from one mention of Ibn Funduq and a few of unnamed "historians of Khurāsān," Ibn al-Athīr did not document the sources for his information on the eastern Islamic world.[27] His colleague al-Nasawī (d. after 1241), the biographer of the last Khwārazm Shāh, Jalāl al-Dīn, and himself a major source for the fall of the Qara Khitai, praised Ibn al-Athīr's treatment of Khwārazm and

[23] E. I. Kychanov (ed. and tr.), *Izmenennyi i zanovo utverzhdennyi kodeks deviza tsarstvovaniia nebesnoe protsvetanie (1149–1169)* (Moscow, 1987), 2:225–7 (ch. 7, art. 440); Shi Jinbo et al. (eds. and trs.), *Xi Xia tiansheng lüling* (Beijing, 1994), 7/174.

[24] On Juwaynī see, e.g., D. O. Morgan, "Persian Historians and the Mongols," in D. O. Morgan (ed.), *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and the Islamic Worlds* (London, 1982), 113–18.

[25] See the discussion in C. Cahen, "The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period," in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1962), 64–6.

[26] For a full list of Ibn Funduq's works see H. El-Saghir, *Abū al-Ḥasan Baihaqī und seine Sprichwörtersammlung Gurar al-amtāl wa-durar al-aqwāl* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), 26–48. The neglect of the Qara Khitai in Ibn Funduq's extant works, however, might be due to their non-chronicle genre.

[27] D. S. Richards, "Ibn al-Athīr and the Later Parts of the *Kāmil*: A Study of Aims and Methods," in Morgan (ed.), *Medieval Historical Writing*, 87–8.

the east, and suggested that Ibn al-Athīr had used Persian histories since "the historical material he put in his book is more than could be culled from the mouths of men."[28]

The third important source is Jūzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* ("The Nāṣirī tables"), a general history from the creation till 1259; most of its chapters (or tables) deal with individual dynasties. The work includes a special chapter on the Qara Khitai, and they are also mentioned in the chapters dealing with their contemporaries. Jūzjānī's description of the rise of the Qara Khitai is completely different from other versions of this subject, and his work includes unique details on Qara Khitai attitudes towards Islam. As a young man in Ghūr (modern Afghanistan), Jūzjānī witnessed the first Mongol invasion of the Muslim world, and might have been aware of the fall of the Qara Khitai which preceded it. Writing in Delhi, where, according to his own testimony, several Qara Khitai achieved important positions,[29] he might have gathered his information from them or from other refugees from the former Qara Khitai territories who, like Jūzjānī, escaped to Delhi after the Mongol invasion.

Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318), an Ilkhanid vizier whose *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* ("The collection of histories") is a sweeping world history, belongs to a later generation, and his reliance on Juwaynī and Ibn al-Athīr can easily be traced. Yet his usage of the term Qara Khitai suggests that he had used Mongol sources as well. While his history of the Mongol and Turkic tribes is essential for understanding the environment of the Qara Khitai and for details of their fall, his specific treatment of the Qara Khitai is quite disappointing. In his history of Chinggis Khan Rashīd al-Dīn included an often-cited paragraph about the rise of the Qara Khitai. Yet he hardly gave any further information on the dynasty's rulers, nor did he try to synthesize information on the Qara Khitai which appears in other parts of his *magnum opus*.[30]

To supplement these major works I have used many other sources. They include mainly literature of different kinds written in the territories of the Qara Khitai (manuals for courtiers, local histories, *adab*[31] works, Muslim legal works); contemporary or nearly contemporary works from other parts of the Muslim world, mainly chronicles of the Saljūqs, 'Abbāsids, Ayyūbids or local histories;[32] collections of

[28] Richards, "Ibn al-Athīr," 84, 88.

[29] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:9,13,19, 22, 28 and see p. 143. For Jūzjānī as a historian see Morgan, "Persian Historians," 110–13.

[30] Rashīd al-Dīn's history of Khwārazm is simply a reworking of Juwaynī's chapter on the same topic, while his history of the Saljūqs mainly follows Nīshāpūrī's *Saljūq nāmah*, whence Rāwandī's *Rāḥat al-sudūr*, although it sometimes adds new information. For a recent translation of the Saljūq part see Rashīd al-Dīn, *The History of the Seljuq Turks from the Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, tr. K. A. Luther (Richmond, 2001). On Rashīd al-Dīn see Morgan, "Persian Historians," 118–21; D. O. Morgan, "Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb," *EI2* 7 (1995), 458–9 and the many references there.

[31] *Adab* is a genre of literature dealing mainly with the general knowledge needed for the well-bred members of the medieval Muslim elite, which includes many historical anecdotes. See C. Pellat, "Adab," *EIr* 1 (1985), 431–44.

[32] For the Saljūq sources see Cahen, "Historiography," *passim*, which also covers most of the Iraqi important works; Ayyūbid chronicles usually follow Ibn al-Athīr (or his sources) in their limited coverage of eastern affairs.



contemporary official documents, mainly from Khwārazm; geographical works; and biographical collections.

Of this latter genre, 'Awfī's *Lubāb al-albāb* ("Quintessence of hearts") is of special importance. 'Awfī (d. ca. 1232) spent much of his youth in Qara Khitai Transoxania, and his uncle Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Adnān wrote the now lost *Ta'rīkh-i Turkistān* ("History of Turkestan"), which recounts the history of the Qarakhanids, who were Qara Khitai's vassals.[33] 'Awfī's work is an anthology of poets which also contains a biographical introduction on each poet. In addition, it includes biographies of and poems by people for whom poetry was only marginal to their other careers as rulers or administrators, including those little known from other sources such as some Qarakhanid rulers. His biography of Shams al-Dīn al-Uzgandī, a *qāḍī* from Farghāna who became the Qara Khitai court doctor, is most valuable, providing us with a rare insight into Qara Khitai administration.

The works of al-Sam'ānī (d. 1166) also deserve to be mentioned here. Although he never discussed the Qara Khitai, his information on the religious life in Qara Khitai Transoxania, where he spent several years in the 1150s, is indispensable for understanding the relationship between the Qara Khitai and their Muslim subjects.

Whereas geographical works are important for determining the image of China in Central Asia, contemporary Muslim travelogues are rather disappointing, especially when compared to their Chinese counterparts. Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī (d. 1169/70), who visited Khwārazm, Balkh and Bukhara in 1153–5, never mentioned the Qara Khitai, and al-Idrīsī (d. 1165), who wrote in Sicily in 1154, did not reach Central Asia. His information on Transoxania and beyond is based on tenth-century reports, mainly following Ibn al-Faqīh.[34]

Apart from contemporary or nearly contemporary works I have also consulted later Muslim works, since medieval Muslim writers often preserved earlier information in relatively late compositions. Most of the later Muslim works follow either Ibn al-Athīr (in Arabic) or Juwaynī (in Persian), although they sometimes include meaningful variants. Of special importance is the *Ta'rīkh-i alfī* ("A millenial history"), compiled in the early seventeenth century by a team of historians in Moghul India to mark the millennium of the Prophet Muḥammad's demise. This

[33] For Majd al-Dīn's biography see 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-albāb* (Tehran, 1954), 154–5, and 511, 571, 600 f; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 17–18. Barthold suggested that the same uncle wrote also another lost book, *Ta'rīkh-i Khitāi* ("A history of Khitai"), which Barthold understood as relating to the Qara Khitai. His assumption is based on the data of Ḥājjī Khalīfa, who in the seventeenth century mentioned *Ta'rīkh Khitāi wa-akhwāl mulūkihā* ("History of Khitai and record of its kings"), a Turkic work written by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Qūshī, but based on the work of Majd al-Dīn (*Kashf al-ẓunūn* [Istanbul, 1941], *'an asāmī al-Kutub wa'l-funūn*, 1:292, 289. Unlike the "History of Turkestan," however, the latter book is never quoted by 'Awfī. I agree with Qazwīnī that Ḥājjī Khalīfa was actually referring to one of several fifteenth-century *Ta'rīkh-i Khatāy*, which record the missions of Timūrid ambassadors to Ming China, and thus this book has nothing to do with either Majd al-Dīn or the Qara Khitai (Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla* [Tehran, 1954] 186–7, n. 2; on the later works see I. Bellér-Hann [ed. and tr.], *A History of Cathay* [Bloomington, 1995], 1–23).

[34] E. Levi-Provencal, "Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnātī," *EI2* 2 (1960), 122; G. Oman, "al-Idrīsī," *EI2* 3 (1971), 1032–4.

compilation combines traditions of Juwaynī and Ibn al-Athīr, yet since its authors seemed to have had direct access to Ibn Funduq's *Mashārib al-tajārib* it includes many details unavailable in earlier sources.[35] The information contained in the semi-legendary *Majmūʿ al-tawārīkh* of the sixteenth century and the unique personal names retained in the seventeenth-century *Taʾrīkh-i Ḥaydarī* probably reflect oral traditions.

The two main Turkic works of the eleventh century, al-Kāshgharī's *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk* ("Compendium of the Turkic dialects") and Yūsuf Ḥāṣṣ Ḥājib's *Qutadghu bilig* ("Wisdom of royal glory"), consulted in translation, are invaluable for shedding light on the society and culture of Central Asia on the eve of the rise of the Qara Khitai.

*Archaeological literature*

The archaeological sources for Qara Khitai history are nearly as problematic as the literary sources. There is no tomb or inscription positively identified as belonging to the Qara Khitai, and early identification of Qara Khitai culture in the Chu valley was almost totally ignored in studies published after the outbreak of the Sino–Soviet dispute, including post-Soviet works.[36] Nevertheless, certain archaeological findings, especially numismatic and epigraphic, can enrich our knowledge of the Qara Khitai and their subjects. The Chinese-type coins of the Qara Khitai and the rare Muslim coins on which the Gürkhan's name appears as the Western Qarakhanid ruler's overlord are unique examples of Qara Khitai material culture.[37] Numismatic findings are also essential for the study of the Qarakhanids, important Qara Khitai vassals. The epigraphic literature contains important evidence for Central Asia's relations with China and with the Muslim world under the Qara Khitai. General archaeological literature is useful for reconstructing the economic situation under the Qara Khitai, and their relations with their neighbors, including China.[38]

[35] For the *Taʾrīkh-i alfī* see S. A. A. Rizvi, "Tarikh-i alfi," in M. Hasan (ed.), *Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi, 1968), 113–23.

[36] In the 1940s and early 1950s Bernshtam unearthed what he called Qara Khitai culture in the Chu valley area. See A. N. Bernshtam, *Istoriko-kul'turnoe proshloe severnoj Kirgizii po materialam bol'shogo Chujskogo kanala* (Frunze, 1943), 25–26, 44; A. N. Bernshtam, *Istoriko-arkheologicheskie ocherki Tsentral'nogo Tian'-Shania i Pamiro-Altaia*, MIAS, 26 (Moscow, 1952), 169–72; A. N. Bernshtam, *Trudy Semirechenskoj arkheologicheskoj expeditsii Chujskaia dolina*, MIAS, 14 (Moscow, 1950), 47–55, 139–42. His findings are cited in the 1956 and 1962 editions of the *Istoriia Kirgizii* (M. P. Viatkin et al., *Istoriia Kirgizii* [Frunze, 1956, 1962], 1:140–1), which stress the apparent Chinese influence on this culture. The 1984 parallel work (A. K. Karupkulov et al., *Istoriia Kirgizskoj SSR* [Frunze, 1984], 1:298–303) contains, however, no reference at all to either Chinese influence in Qyrghyzstan or to Qara Khitai material culture. See pp. 174–5 for further discussion and examples.

[37] See ch. 2; ch. 4, introduction and p. 126.

[38] See especially the works of Kochnev, Goriacheva and Nastits in the bibliography; for Chinese archaeological literature see the annual *Zhongguo kaogu xue nianjian* (Yearbook of Chinese archaeology) and, since 1996, also the journal *Archaeology and Art Index* published in Hong Kong.



*Previous scholarship*

The starting point for this study is two monumental works: Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng's *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1125)*, published in 1949, and V. V. Barthold's *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, first published in 1900 (in Russian). Wittfogel and Feng's work includes a detailed appendix, prepared with the help of K. Menges, which is devoted to the Qara Khitai.[39] In this appendix they collected many references, mainly from Chinese sources, for Qara Khitai history and analyzed certain aspects of their society and culture. They did not, however, try to reconstruct Qara Khitai political history, and their highly intelligent analysis is impaired by the limited extent of Muslim sources (in translation) available to them.

The third chapter of Barthold's *Turkestan* is devoted to the Qara Khitai and the Khwārazm Shāhs. In it, as well as in some of his other works, Barthold tried to reconstruct the political history of the Qara Khitai, mainly after they had settled in Central Asia. A master of Islamic sources, Barthold had only a very limited range of Chinese sources (in translation) at his disposal.[40] Nor did he treat many aspects of institutional history.[41]

Scholarly interest in the Qara Khitai, however, began earlier, and flourished especially in the late nineteenth century. The first article devoted to the Qara Khitai in the west which I was able to locate is dated 1828,[42] and D'Ohsson's classic of the Mongols (1834) also mentioned them.[43] The connection between the Qara Khitai and Prester John, suggested already by D'Ohsson, was another reason for scholarly interest in the Qara Khitai.[44] The basis for modern research on the Qara Khitai was laid in 1888, when Bretschneider, a physician with the Russian legation in Beijing, inspired by Yule's translation of *The Book of Marco Polo* (1871), published his *Medieval Researches from East Asian Sources*. Bretschneider's chapter on the Qara Khitai includes an English translation of the Western Liao chronicle of the *Liao shi*; of several other important Chinese texts, especially chapter 121 of the *Jin shi*; and of Rashīd al-Dīn's account of the rise of the Qara Khitai and Juwaynī's chapter on the Qara Khitai, both taken from D'Ohsson's work.[45] Moreover, the book includes translations of several other Chinese works, mainly travelogues, which are also relevant for the study of the Qara Khitai. The book became an indispensable source for non-Chinese historians working on the Qara Khitai (including Barthold) and, despite several problems, mainly chronological errors and omissions, Bretschneider's translations are still useful. None of those

[39] WF, 619–74. [40] Barthold, *Turkestan*, 37–8.

[41] See Wittfogel and Feng's criticism in WF, 619.

[42] M. Klaproth, "Sur le titre de Gour-khan," *JA* 2 (1828), 294–305.

[43] D'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguis Khan jusqu'à Timour Bey* (The Hague and Amsterdam, 1834), 1:163–74.

[44] For Prester John see p. 45. The rich modern literature on Prester John, however, adds very little to the factual knowledge on the Qara Khitai.

[45] E. V. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London, 1888), 1:208–35.

early works, however, tried to synthesize the historical information on the Qara Khitai in the different sources.

In 1934 Bretschneider's chapter on the Qara Khitai was re-translated into Chinese by Liang Yuandong,[46] who added extensive commentary. The work, for the first time exposing Muslim sources on the Qara Khitai to a wide Chinese audience, aroused considerable interest in the subject among Chinese scholars. Whereas this soon declined, mainly due to the deteriorating political conditions, China remains the only place in the world in which one can find a steady stream of publications on the Qara Khitai, though of uneven quality.

Taking full advantage of earlier Chinese scholarship, and using both Barthold and Wittfogel and Feng, the next major advance in the study of the Qara Khitai came in 1987 when Wei Liangtao published his *Xi Liao shi yanjiu* ("Studies on Western Liao history"), followed in 1991 by the mainly analogous *Xi Liao shi gang* ("A draft history of the Western Liao").[47] Wei's works include a political history of the dynasty; a description of the social and economic situation, divided according to the different kingdoms which formed parts of the Qara Khitai empire; and a chapter on Qara Khitai cultural and religious life. The first book includes a review of the sources and a chapter on the degree of Chinese influence in the Qara Khitai realm. Wei used several Chinese sources not utilized by Wittfogel and Feng, as well as relevant archaeological literature. Wei is, however, less strong on the Muslim sources, a small variety of which he had read in translation.[48]

In 1996 Ji Zongan published her book *Xi Liao shi lun: Yelü Dashi yanjiu* ("Historical essay on the Western Liao: a study of Yelü Dashi"). Concentrating on the early period of the Qara Khitai, and analyzing certain aspects of the economy, society and culture of their empire in general (i.e., not according to regional lines as Wei did), Ji's range of sources does not exceed that of Wei. Her book is still dominated by Chinese sources and by a tendency to emphasize the Chinese aspects of the Qara Khitai.

References to the Qara Khitai in Russian general works usually add little to Barthold's analysis.[49] In 1989, however, G. G. Pikov published his *Zapadnye Kidani* ("The Western Khitans")[50] in Novosibirsk, attempting to synthesize archeological and literary information from Muslim and Chinese sources. His work, dealing with the sources for the study of the Qara Khitai, their political history and their socio-economical history, is nonetheless somewhat disappointing. For Chinese sources he used mainly the excerpts in Wittfogel and Feng and

[46] *LYD*. [47] Abbreviated in this study as *XLSYJ* and *XLSG* respectively.

[48] Among the main Muslim sources, there is a Chinese scholarly translation of the works of Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn. Wei also used Raverty's translation for Jūzjānī (which was translated for him into Chinese) and the partial translations of Ibn al-Athīr included in the Institut Vostokovedeniia collection *Materialy po istorii Kirgizov i Kirgizii* (Moscow, 1973). Wei's description of the fall of the Qara Khitai, for example, relies almost exclusively on Juwaynī's work.

[49] See, e.g., B. G. Gafurov, *Tadzhiki* (Dushanbe, 1989), 2:126–36; B. G. Gafurov and A. Belenitskij (eds.), *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo naroda* (Moscow, 1964), 2:241–6; Akademiia Nauk Kazakhskoj SSR, *Istoriia Kazakhskoj SSR* (Almaty, 1979), 2:36–48; S. N. Tolstova et al. (eds.), *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana* (Tashkent, 1960), 1:297–305; *Istoriia Kirgizskoj SSR*, 1:298–303; Viatkin et al. (eds.), *Istoriia Kirgizii*, 1:141–3.

[50] Abbreviated as *ZK*.



Bretschneider, together with the Russian translation of the *Qidan guo zhi*, and he was completely unaware of post-1950s Chinese scholarship.[51] Muslim sources were often quoted in translation as well. More important, Pikov's analysis is frequently simplified, and he often ascribes to the Qara Khitai general features of the Liao dynasty, without attempting to distinguish between the two entities.

In Western scholarship, Wittfogel and Feng's book remains the standard source for the study of the Qara Khitai, and very little of an original nature has been added to our knowledge of this dynasty since its publication. General works therefore treat the subject lightly, if at all, and sometimes lack accuracy.[52] However, Western scholarship, either historical or anthropological, dealing with other Inner Asian people and their relations with sedentary civilizations, which has grown considerably since the 1950s, certainly broadens our understanding of the Qara Khitai. Of special value for this work were the studies of Thomas T. Allsen on the Mongol empire; of Peter B. Golden on the Qipchaqs and on Inner Asian nomads in general; and of Anatoly M. Khazanov on nomads and the state. I have also benefited greatly from the publication in late 1994 of volume VI of the *Cambridge History of China*, devoted to the history of the Liao, Xi Xia, Jin and Yuan dynasties, and from the historiographical discussion that followed it.

## Historical background

The last step before moving on to the study itself is a short historical background, which reviews the conditions in Eastern and Central Asia on the eve of the rise of the Qara Khitai.

The fall of the Tang dynasty (618–906) in China, which coincided with the absence of a strong power in the steppe since the fall of the Uighur empire in 840, paved the way for the rise of the Khitan Liao dynasty in Manchuria (907–1125). Named after the Liao river in their south Manchurian homeland, the Khitans soon conquered the adjacent kingdom of Bohai[53] and subdued Mongolia. In 938 they obtained the cession of sixteen prefectures of north China in the region of modern Beijing from the northern Chinese state of Jin (not to be confused with the later

[51] See Wei Liangtao's review of Pikov's article on the Qara Khitai army, which was translated into Chinese in 1984: Wei Liangtao, "Ping Pikefu de 'Hala Qidan guojia de junshi zuzhi,'" *Xinjiang daxue xuebao* 1987/2, 44–6.

[52] See, e.g., the otherwise very useful synthesis of D. Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia* (Oxford, 1998), 1:377–9; for a negligent treatment see R. Foltz, "Ecumenical Mischief under the Mongols," *CAJ* 43 (1999), 42. Useful recent articles are D. Sinor, "The Kitan and the Kara Kitay," in *HCCA4*, 227–42; and the short note in H. Franke, "The Forest People of Manchuria: Kitans and Jurchens," in *CHEIA*, 410–12; also P. D. Buell, "Early Mongol Expansion in Western Siberia and Turkestan (1207–1219) – a Reconstruction," *CAJ* 36 (1992), 1–32. For other general works see, e.g., R. Grousett, *The Empire of the Steppes*, tr. N. Walford (New Brunswick, 1970), 164–6; D. O. Morgan, *Medieval Persia* (London, 1988), 46–50; S. Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge, 2000), 99–100.

[53] Bohai or Parhae was a state established in the eighth century AD in northern Manchuria and northern Korea by a former Korean general, which was a tributary state of the Tang dynasty. See J. Reckel, *Bohai: Geschichte und Kultur eines mandschurischen–koreanischen Königreiches der Tang-Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1995).

Jurchen Jin). In 947, after a short-lived attempt to expand further southward, and a three-month occupation of the Chinese capital of Kaifeng, the Khitans decided to retreat to their former lands, limiting their possession of Chinese territories to the sixteen prefectures. Those prefectures were a constant bone of contention between the Khitans and the rising Han Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279), which attempted to unify China.

In 1005, after several decades of border warfare, the Liao and the Song concluded a peace treaty. The treaty of Shanyuan, in which the Song agreed to give the Liao a considerable annual payment, also clearly demarcated the border between the two states. This set the stage for the peaceful coexistence of the two states throughout the eleventh century, interrupted only for short periods in 1042 and 1074–6. The treaty was concluded in terms of parity between the northern court (Liao) and its brother state, the southern court (Song), thereby implying the mutual existence of two legitimate Sons of Heaven, which was contrary to the traditional Chinese world order. Other states bordering upon the Liao, such as Korea and the Tangut empire of the Xi Xia (1032–1227), centered in the modern northwestern Chinese provinces of Ningxia and Gansu, eventually recognized the formal suzerainty of the Liao and sent annual tribute. The money and goods extorted from the Song formed the basis for extensive Khitan commerce with lands to the west. It was in this way that the ethnonym Khitan, in its Turkic form Khitai, came to be associated with China in Eurasia.[54]

The essential feature of the Liao state was its dual administration. The northern branch of the administration controlled the affairs of the nomads, Khitans and others, while the southern branch handled those of the sedentary population, mostly Chinese and Bohai. Throughout their reign most of the Khitans remained nomads, and their emperor moved throughout the year among his seasonal camps (*nabo*) and the five capitals of his kingdom, his court following closely behind. Khitan cultural identity was also demonstrated by their national scripts, still only partially deciphered, and by their unique material culture, many of whose remains have recently been excavated in China.[55]

[54] For the political history of the Liao see, e.g., Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," *passim*; *LSG*, *passim*; Franke, "Forest People," 400–13. For the relations between the Liao and the Chinese dynasties see Tao Jingshen, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung–Liao Relations* (Tucson, 1988), *passim*; N. Standen, "(Re)constructing the Frontiers in Tenth-Century North China," in N. Standen and D. Powers (eds.), *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands 700–1700* (London, 1999), 55–79; I. S. Leung, "'Felt Yurts Neatly Arrayed, Large Tents Huddle Close': Visualizing the Frontier in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127)," in N. Di Cosmo and D. J. Wyatt (eds.), *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries and Human Geography in Chinese History* (London and New York, 2003), 192–219; for Liao western trade see p. 33.

[55] For Liao culture see especially WF, *passim*; also Feng Jiqin et al., *Qidan zu wenhua shi* (Heilongjiang, 1994); Huang Zhenyun, *Liao dai wen shi xin tan* (Beijing, 1999); Beijing Lishi Bowuguan et al., *Qidan wangchao: Neimenggu Liao dai wenwu jinghua* (Beijing, 2002); Tsao Hsingyuan, "From Appropriation to Possession: A Study of the Cultural Identity of the Liao through their Pictorial Art," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1996; N. Shatzman-Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture* (Honolulu, 1996). For Liao scripts see Chinggeltei, "On the Problems of Reading Kitan Characters," *Acta Orientalia* 55 (2002), 99–114. Several aspects of the Liao period are discussed in the different chapters of this study, where they serve for comparison with the Qara Khitai.



In the early twelfth century the declining power of Liao emperors and their economic difficulties prompted the Jurchens, a north Manchurian subject tribe, to rebel. In 1114 a full-scale war broke out between the Khitans and the Jurchens. It resulted in the establishment of the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234), which succeeded the Liao in 1125. Even before the final dissolution of the Liao, Jurchen superiority induced Yelü Dashi to flee westward, thereby launching the history of the Western Liao.

West of China, the fall of the Uighurs in 840 opened a period of decline for the steppe people of Mongolia. The vanquished Uighurs moved mainly to the region of Xinjiang where they founded the Gaochang kingdom (850–1250) near modern Turfan. The Qyrghyz, who had defeated the Uighurs, had no ambitions to establish an empire for themselves in Mongolia. By the tenth century they had already returned to their homeland in the Yenisei region, and the Liao conquest of Mongolia therefore met with very moderate opposition. The rise of the Liao shifted many Turkic tribes westward where they started making their way into the Middle East, and likewise brought the ancestors of Chinggis Khan to Mongolia. When Abaoji, the Liao founder, conquered the Orkhon region in 924, he offered the Gaochang Uighurs permission to return to their former lands in Mongolia. The Uighurs declined the offer, but remained loyal vassals of the Khitans until the last days of the Liao dynasty.[56]

Further west, in the eastern Islamic world, the weakening of the 'Abbāsid caliphate since the mid-ninth century brought about the emergence of independent dynasties in eastern Iran and Transoxania. Among those dynasties, the Sāmānids (875–999), centered in Bukhara, were of special importance for steppe politics. The Sāmānids not only extended the Islamic territory into the steppe, but also increasingly based their armies on Turkic slaves, for the capture of whom they often plundered the steppe. Moreover, the missionary activity they encouraged, combined with their political, economic and cultural prestige, was instrumental in the Islamization of whole Turkic tribes beyond their realm. In the mid-tenth century the Turks who ruled Kashgar and Balāsāghūn, known in modern research literature as the Qarakhanids, embraced Islam. The Muslim Qarakhanids soon began to expand into the Muslim world. In 999 they conquered Transoxania from the Sāmānids, while the western territories of the Sāmānids were taken by another Turkic Muslim dynasty, the Ghaznawids (994–1186), who rose from the ranks of the Sāmānids' military slaves.

The Qarakhanid–Ghaznawid wars, together with a chain of migrations inaugurated by the Khitans' subjugation of Mongolia in the tenth century and by the emergence of the Tangut state in 1032, brought about the rise of the Saljūq Turks.

[56] For the steppe after the Uighurs see, e.g., P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic People* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 176–83; T. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1989), 165–9; for the Gaochang Uighurs see, e.g., A. M. Von Gabain, *Das Leben im uigurischen Königreich von Qoco (850–1250)* (Wiesbaden, 1973); D. I. Tikhonov, *Khoziajstvo i obshchestvenny stroj Ujgurskogo gosudarstva X–XIV vv.* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1966); Abe Takeo, *Xi Huihu guo shi de yanjiu* (Urumchi, 1986).

Originating in the Turkic Oghuz tribes and embracing Islam in the late tenth century, in 1040 the Saljūqs defeated the Ghaznawids in Dandānqān near Marw and, continuing westward, they entered Baghdad in 1055. There they exterminated the Dailami Būyid dynasty (935–1055) and enthroned themselves as Sultans, becoming the real power behind the still reigning ʿAbbāsid Caliphs. In 1071 the Saljūqs occupied Anatolia, until then ruled by Byzantium, and soon afterwards renewed their interest in Central Asia. Meanwhile, from the mid-eleventh century onward the Qarakhanids were divided into a western khanate centered in Transoxania and an eastern khanate, which ruled in eastern Turkestan and Semirechye. In 1089 the Saljūqs took over Bukhara and Samarqand and made the Western Qarakhanids their vassals. Before 1103 the Eastern Qarakhanids also surrendered to the Saljūqs.

By the late eleventh century, however, following the death of the Saljūq Sultan Malikshāh and his famous vizier Niẓām al-Mulk, the Saljūqs also fell prey to family rivalries and internecine strife. The Western Qarakhanids therefore tried to end Saljūq dominance in Transoxania. The Qarakhanid leader Qadr Khan was defeated in 1102 by Malikshāh's son, Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157), the viceroy in the east and since 1118 the supreme Saljūq Sultan. Sanjar intervened in Transoxania once more for similar reasons in the 1130s, thereafter appointing his Qarakhanid nephew Maḥmūd II (r. 1135–41) as the Western Qarakhanid ruler. Another problematic eastern vassal of the Saljūqs was Atsïz Khwārazm Shāh, whose family had held the rich and autonomous province of Khwārazm since 1097. The relations between Sanjar and Atsïz began to deteriorate in the 1130s due to the latter's growing ambitions for independence, and culminated in an open struggle that took place in 1138–40 and ended in victory for Sanjar. Despite those challenges, the eastern lands of the Saljūq sultanate were in much better shape than its western territories, where military commanders and *atabegs*[57] secured much of the local power, thereby dissolving Saljūq authority.[58]

It was into this fragmented Central Asian world that Yelü Dashi led the remnants of the Liao dynasty, thereby beginning a new period in the history of the region.

[57] An *atabeg* (father-chief) was a notable to whom the ruler assigned the tutoring of one of his young sons. The tutor tended to eventually marry the boy's mother and often became the real ruler of the prince's appanage. See C. Cahen, "Atābak," *EIr* 1 (1985), 878.

[58] For a general description of the above-mentioned events see C. E. Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (1000–1217 AD)," in *CHI5*, 1–202; P. B. Golden, "The Karakhanids and Early Islam," in *CHEIA*, 343–70. For the Sāmānids see, e.g., R. N. Frye, *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement* (Norman, 1965); J. Paul, *The State and the Military: The Samanid Case* (Bloomington, 1994); N. N. Negmativ, "The Samanid State," *HCCA4*, 77–94. For the Qarakhanids see O. Karaev, *Istoriia Karakhanidskogo kaganata* (Frunze, 1983); Wei Liangtao, "Halahan wangchao zhengzhi shi shulue," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao* 1982/2, 16–47; E. A. Davidovich, "The Karakhanids," *HCCA4*, 119–44; O. Pritsak, *Studies in Medieval Eurasian History* (London, 1981), arts. XIV–XVIII. For the Saljūqs in Central Asia see S. G. Agadzhanov, *Gosudarstvo Sel'dzhukidov i Sredniaia Azia v XI–XII vv.* (Moscow, 1991); C. E. Bosworth and A. Sevin, "The Seljuqs and the Khwarazm Shahs," in *HCCA4*, 145–76. For the Khwārazm Shāhs see Z. M. Buniiatov, *Gosudarstvo Khorezmshakhov-Anushteginidov* (Moscow, 1986).

PART I

# Political history

CHAPTER 1

# From Liao to Western Liao: Yelü Dashi and the establishment of the Qara Khitai empire

The transformation of the remnants of the Liao from a band of fugitives in north China to the heads of a strong Central Asian empire was mainly the work of the dynasty founder, Yelü Dashi. This chapter follows his career from his early days in Liao China to his biggest achievement, the battle of Qatwān in 1141, which established Qara Khitai rule in Transoxania, and analyzes the reasons for his success.

## Yelü Dashi's early career

Known in the Muslim sources as Nūshī Taifū, Qushqīn Taifū or Qushqīn, son of Baighū, Yelü Dashi was probably born in 1087.[1] Very little is known about the background of the Qara Khitai founder except the few laconic phrases in the *Liao shi*: He was a member of the Yelü royal clan of the Khitan, an eighth-generation descendant of Abaoji, the founder of the Liao, but there is no mention of his actual kinship to the last Liao emperor, Tianzuo (r. 1101–25).[2] Dashi's father and grandfather are not mentioned in Liao sources, and altogether he seems to have been a rather minor member of the royal clan, though certainly one with great prospects.

Dashi was given a good, dual princely education, since we know that he was well versed in both Chinese and Khitan scripts and was also a great rider and archer.[3] In 1115 he received the title *jinshi*, awarded to those who passed the last

[1] Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 236; Aḥmad Ghaffārī, *Nusakh jahān arā* (Tehran, 1963), 161; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 242. Cf. Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire des Mongols et des Tatars* (Rpr. Amsterdam and St. Leonards, 1970), 49 (Toushi Taifar); *ZK*, 56 (the unattested Taigir Ili). Taifu (and Taifar) probably stands for the Chinese title *taifu* (grand mentor) that was given to Khitan military leaders, though there is no indication in the Chinese sources of Dashi receiving or assuming such a title. Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:222, and see there for his construction of Dashi as the title *taishi* (grand mentor). For the birth date see *LS*, 30/353; Qian Daxin (d. 1804), *Shijiazhai yangxin lu* (Shanghai, 1983), 188–92; WF, 627, n. 1.

[2] *SC*, 98/15a defines Dashi as Tianzuo's *wei di*, "false little brother." Yet the phrase means only that Dashi and Tianzuo were of the same generation. This is, however, the source of the Qing assertion that Dashi was Tianzuo's younger brother (Li E, *Liao shi shi yi* [*SKQS* ed.], 11/932; Li Youtang, *Liao shi jishi benmo* [*Beijing*, 1983], 42/231).

[3] *LS*, 30/355; WF, 623; JZA 1996, 7–8.

stage of the Chinese examinations,[4] and thereafter was appointed to be a scribe in the Khitan Hanlin academy, a function that in Liao times also involved military duties. The title borne by the Khitan Hanlin academy's members, *linya* (the Khitan name for Hanlin), became closely associated with Dashi, who is often called Dashi Linya.[5]

From this point onwards Dashi began to hold offices in the Liao administration. But he was awarded the title of *jinshi* in a crucial year for Liao history: In 1115 Aguda, the Jurchen leader, proclaimed himself emperor of the new Jin dynasty, and began establishing his authority over former Liao regions in Manchuria.[6] Soon afterwards Dashi was nominated as the prefect (*lashi*) of Taizhou and Xiangzhou, near the new border with the Jin. Taizhou was conquered by the Jin in 1117, and although we know nothing at all about Dashi's activities in Xiangzhou, he must have done a good job, since he was promoted soon enough to be the military commander (*jiedushi*) of Liaoxing commandery, an important post in Hebei, near the Liao–Song border.[7] There too Dashi must have been successful, since as early as 1122 he is described as one of the "great ministers."[8]

But as Dashi began to rise in the imperial bureaucracy, the Liao were losing more and more ground to the Jurchens. The latter advanced from Manchuria in 1117 and conquered the Liao supreme capital in 1120. In early 1122, the Jurchens took the central capital, and advanced towards the western and southern circuits.[9] The reigning Liao emperor, Tianzuo, proved incompetent in dealing with the Jurchen menace. His behavior encouraged the Khitan and Xi[10] notables to dethrone him

[4] *LS*, 30/355. Dashi is the only known Khitan ever to hold this Chinese title, since the Khitans were usually barred from taking the Chinese examinations through which this title was received (*LS*, 89/1351; WF, 492; Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 92). The *Liao shi* might have confused the title with the Khitan title *linya* (Khitan: scribe and see below; WF, 627), or, more plausibly, the title may prove that towards the end of Liao rule the Khitans could have participated in the examinations (Zhang Zhenming, *Qidan shilue* [Beijing, 1979], 161; cited in *XLSYJ*, 52; also *XLSG*, 21; *ZK*, 56; JZA 1984, 44; JZA 1996, 8). For the dating of Dashi's attaining the *jinshi* see *XLSYJ*, 52–3; *XLSG*, 21; also JZA 1984, 44; cf. Tang Changru, "Yelü Dashi nianpu," *Guoxue lunheng*, 1/7 (1936), 14; WF, 627; *ZK*, 56. For the Chinese examination system which was based on erudition in the Confucian classics and became the main channel through which Chinese received governmental offices see B. A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000).

[5] *LS*, 30/355. Dashi was first appointed to be an attendant (*yingju*), and then promoted to be a scribe in charge of edicts (*chengzhi*): WF, 442, 476; for Dashi Linya see, e.g., *LS*, 29/349, 30/355, 60/931; *SS*, 35/683, 391/11969; 486/14030. On the Hanlin academy, an elite scholarly institution founded in eighth-century China, see B. A. Elman, "Imperial Politics and Confucian Societies in Late Imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin Academies," *Modern China* 15 (1989), 397–418; on the Hanlin academy under the Khitans see He Tianming, "Liao dai Hanlin yuan tantao," *Song Liao Jin Yuan shi* 1992/4, 61–7.

[6] On Aguda's accession and his advance against the Liao see, e.g., Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 140–53; H. Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *CHC6*, 220–5; *JCS*, 53–76; Liu Pujiang, "Guanyu Jin chao kai guo shi de zhenshixing zhiyi," in *LJSL*, 1–22.

[7] *LS*, 30/355. [8] *LS*, 29/343.

[9] On the Jin advance against the Liao till its conquest see the references in note 6 above.

[10] The Xi (Qay) were a Turkicized Mongol people, closely connected to the Khitans. For more details see Deng Guangming et al. (eds.), *Liao Song Xi Xia Jin shi* (Beijing and Shanghai, 1988), 325–6 and the references there; Golden, *Introduction*, 164–5.



in order to raise a more competent leader to the throne. Tianzuo was able to thwart an attempt, organized by Liao generals in 1115, to install his uncle, Yelü Chun (1063–1122), apparently without Chun's approval. In 1121 he uncovered an attempt to install his son, the prince of Jin, arranged by the prince's mother and her brother-in-law, Yelü Yudu. Consequently, the prince of Jin, a leading candidate for the throne, was executed, and most of the coup organizers defected to the Jurchens' ranks.[11] These developments not only interfered with Liao attempts to control the Jurchen advance, but also eliminated an important segment of the Liao elite, thereby facilitating the rise of relatively anonymous figures such as Yelü Dashi.

Dashi's rise to prominence began in 1122, when he was among the Liao notables who in the third month of that year enthroned Prince Yelü Chun at Yanjing as the first emperor of the Northern Liao, degrading Tianzuo to the rank of a prince. This took place after Tianzuo had decided to escape from the southern capital and continued to avoid the approaching Jurchens, leaving the popular Prince Chun to guard Yanjing. The justification for Chun's enthronement, ascribed to Dashi and Xiao Gan, a leading Xi commander, was based on the Chinese precedent of Tang Suzong's seizure of the throne during the rebellion of An Lushan. Tang Suzong ascended the throne after he had obliged his father, Tang Xuanzong, to abdicate after the latter avoided the rebels by leaving his capital and finding refuge in the western province of Sichuan.[12] Chun's state, though known as the Northern Liao, was confined to Liao sedentary southern regions, while Tianzuo still controlled the nomadic areas of the far west.[13]

Chun entrusted Dashi with a vague responsibility for the army units (*junlu*),[14] but it was the latter's familiarity with the Liao–Song border that proved to be crucial as soon as the Song threat became apparent. From 1117 onward the Song were trying to form an alliance with the Jin against the Liao, hoping to recover their sixteen prefectures of Yanyun, lost to the Khitans in 937. Though the two states agreed to join in alliance against the Liao, they concluded no formal treaty. Furthermore, being preoccupied till 1119 with the wars against the Xi Xia, and then with Fang La's rebellion in Zhejiang in 1120–1, the Song did not take an active part in the struggle against the Liao. In 1122, when Aguda began to threaten the Liao western circuit, which included some of the sixteen prefectures, he made it clear that he was not going to return the whole of this land to the Song, and would consider returning part of the territory only if the Song were to conquer it themselves. Realizing that they would have to seize some of the spoils before the Jin claimed them all, the Song hastily mobilized a huge army that was sent against

[11] On these events see, e.g., Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 143–8; Yao Congwu, *Liao chao shi*, in *Yao Congwu xiansheng quanji* (Taibei, 1972), 2:305. The prince of Jin should not be confused with the Jurchen Jin. See the glossary of Chinese characters.

[12] *LS*, 29/343, 30/352, 355; Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 147. On Yelü Chun see *LS*, 30/352; *QDGZ*, ch. 11; *SHY*, 175/8, 6843–4; *DJGZ*, 2/10. On the An Lushan rebellion and the succession crisis following it see, e.g., D. Twitchett, "Hsuan Tsung," in D. Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 3: The Sui and T'ang Dynasties. Part I* (Cambridge, 1979), 453–63.

[13] *LS*, 30/352; *QDGZ*, 11/121–2; *DJGZ*, 2/24. [14] *LS*, 30/353.

the Liao southern circuit, hoping that Yanjing's predominantly Chinese population would join them against the Khitans. A Song messenger was sent to Yelü Chun to persuade him to surrender. He refused and sent Yelü Dashi with 1,500 or 2,000 horsemen to camp in Zhaozhou (in the southeastern part of Xincheng county in Hebei) as preparation for a possible Song attack.[15] Dashi, by then promoted to chief commander (*dutong*) of the southwestern circuit (*Xinan lu*), his rank roughly equal to that of a king (*wang*),[16] rebuked the Song forces, using Confucian slogans to call upon them not to forsake their long-lasting friendship with the Liao. The Song forces ignored him, but on the fifth month of 1122 the Song general, Yang Keshi, was taken by surprise by Dashi's troops in (the unidentified) Langoutian.[17] Chun sent a reinforcement of 20,000 or 30,000 men to the border area, under the leadership of Xiao Gan, to whom Dashi apparently was subordinate. The combined force crossed the Baigou river (the Song–Liao frontier), and Dashi and Xiao Gan were able to take a large Song army, under the command of Zhong Shidao, by surprise later in the same month.[18] An additional Song attempt was checked early in the next month.[19] At that stage Dashi again chose to address the Song commanders, rebuking them once more for violating a hundred years of friendship in response to Jin offers, and arguing that the Liao had not been tempted by a similar Tangut invitation to attack the Song. While he was ready to make peace, he made it clear he could also fight the Song mercilessly. The Song forces took this threat seriously and retreated southward,[20] but Chun's death just three months after his coronation changed the balance again.

Chun died at the end of the sixth month of 1122, leaving no successor. Dashi's leading role in handling the Northern Liao's affairs after Yelü Chun's demise certainly reflects the rise in his position following his military successes. Dashi and Xiao Gan rushed to Yanjing where they enthroned Chun's widow Xiao Defei, apparently as regent for Tianzuo's son, the prince of Qin, who was in hiding with his father. Not all the Khitans were pleased with the new arrangement, and several of Chun's former adherents defected to the Song.[21] Song forces were quick to take advantage of the general chaos. They crossed the Baigou river and took many Khitan prisoners, but Dashi and Xiao Gan's troops, who hurried back to the border, were able to defeat them.[22] Despite the new empress's expressed willingness to declare herself a Song vassal, a great battle took place in the tenth month of 1122, when an enormous Song army, estimated at 500,000 men, challenged the less than 20,000 men of the Khitan border army not far from the Hugou river (the modern

[15] *SC*, 7/2b; on the Song role in the Liao–Jin war see Tao Jingshen, *Two Sons of Heaven*, 87–97; Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 148–9; *JCS*, 80–3; S. T. Kozhanov, "Nachal'nyj etap voiny mezhdu imperiiami Sun i Tszin," in *Istoriia i kul'tura Vostoka Azii* (Novosibirsk, 1980), 39–42; Yao Congwu, *Liao chao shi*, 311–13.
[16] *SC*, 7/2b. [17] *SC*, 7/4a–b; *SHY*, 175/8; *JY*, 1/6.
[18] *SC*, 7/5b; *SHY*, 175/8; *SS*, 22/410, 335/10751; *QDGZ*, 11/123. [19] *SC*, 7/2b, 4a–b, 5a.
[20] *SC*, 8/7a–b; cf. *DJGZ*, 2/10; *QDGZ*, 11/123 for a different wording of Dashi's speech.
[21] *SC*, 9/4b; *LS*, 29/343; *DJGZ*, 2/10–11; *QDGZ*, 11/123–4. See also Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 149.
[22] *SC*, 9/4b; *QDGZ*, 11/124.



Youding river near Beijing). After a few days of indecisive fighting, the Khitans lit a fire near the river in the evening; the Song army, assuming that Khitan reinforcements were on their way, fled. The Song attempt to conquer Yanjing a few weeks later was also checked by Dashi and Xiao Gan.[23]

But while the Khitans managed to halt the Song, the Jin continued to advance, taking the strategic Juyong pass by the end of 1122, thereby directly threatening Yanjing. After Aguda rejected her claims for vassalage and peace proposals, and knowing that most of Yanjing's population was ready to surrender, Empress Xiao left the city by night accompanied by Dashi and Xiao Gan's troops. Before the group had passed fifty *li*, Yanjing was taken by the Jin without any opposition.[24] The fugitives now had to choose their way, and this was decided on an ethnic basis: Xiao Gan, followed by Xi and Bohai troops, went to the Xi homeland (near the Liao central capital), there to establish the ephemeral Great Xi kingdom. This entity ceased to exist five months later when Xiao Gan was murdered by his own men.[25] Dashi preferred to return to Tianzuo. After he dismissed and beheaded the leader of the Khitan faction who objected to this move, claiming that they could not face Tianzuo after enthroning Chun, Dashi was followed by 7,000 Khitan troops; he also compelled the helpless empress to join him.[26]

It was at this stage that Dashi became the actual leader of the Khitans for the first time. Yet, unlike Xiao Gan (or Chun), at this moment he did not aspire to establish his own kingdom, but instead chose to go back to Tianzuo. His choice made sense: Tianzuo still enjoyed sufficient prestige to gather the Khitans around him. Moreover, Tianzuo was stationed in the strategically located Yin mountains surrounded by a desert, north of the bend of the Yellow river near the Liao–Xia border. From this site he also had access to the tribal warriors of the west.[27] Although Dashi had taken part in enthroning Chun, he assumed that the emperor would not reject his military talents and his loyal troops out of pride.

Indeed, Tianzuo was happy to see the reinforcements, and executed only the empress and one of her allies. Although he rebuked Dashi for enthroning Chun, Tianzuo had nothing to say to Dashi's reply that

> even at the time when the empire was still in full vigor, Your Majesty had not been able once to repulse the enemy, but had fled far away, abandoning the people in their calamities. And had I then placed Chun on the throne, the reigning family would still have been descendants of our ancestor, Taizu. Has it not been the more dignified course now thus to act, instead of imploring the enemy for mercy?[28]

[23] *SC*, 10/11a–12a, 11/1a–3a; *QDGZ*, 11/124–6.
[24] *SC*, 12/3b–4a, 6b; *LS*, 29/345; *QDGZ*, 11/126–7. *Li* is a measure of length, roughly equal to half a kilometer.
[25] *SC*, 12/4a; *LS*, 29/345–7; *QDGZ*, 12/129–31. For more details on Xiao Gan's fortune, see *SC*, ch. 18.
[26] *SC*, 12/4a; *LS*, 29/345–7; *QDGZ*, 12/129–30. For the relationship between Dashi and the empress, see JZA 1996, 22–3 (n. 77).
[27] *JY*, 1/10; JZA 1984, 46; JZA 1996, 14.
[28] *LS*, 30/355; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:212.

This statement may be seen as containing justification for Dashi's subsequent moves. It is noteworthy that on this occasion he did not recite Chinese precedents, but rather the Khitan–Inner Asian notion of the state as the joint possession of a clan.

Under Tianzuo, Dashi continued to serve as chief commander (*dutong*). He threatened the Jin at Fengshengzhou (in northwestern Hebei), hoping to regain Liao control of the Juyong pass. But while he was stationed east of the nearby Longmen, in the fourth month of 1123, Jin soldiers caught him and put his army to flight.[29] Bound in chains, Dashi was forced by Jin generals to lead them straight to Tianzuo's palace at Qingzhong (south of modern Hohot). Tianzuo was out in the Yin mountains, but much of his property and many members of his entourage and of the imperial family were captured. Only one son, the prince of Liang, managed to escape.[30] Dashi's guidance in this raid, a betrayal not mentioned in Liao sources, appearing only in those of the Jin and the Song, won the attention of the Jurchen emperor, who issued an imperial edict praising him. Soon afterwards, impressed by Dashi's cleverness and eloquence, the Jin emperor even granted Dashi the hand of a princess in marriage.[31]

Dashi could easily have remained within the Jurchens' ranks, as many Khitans chose to do in those days. It is hard to determine whether his departure from the Jin after five months in captivity was the fruit of long-term planning, as implied by the *Bei shi ji*,[32] or a spontaneous reaction to an immediate threat, as described in the *Song mo ji wen*. According to the latter source, Dashi was prompted to escape after a dramatic "double six"[33] game that he played with the Jin commander, Nian Han. On winning the game, Dashi was afraid that the offended general would try to kill him. He fled by night with his five sons, leaving his wife behind him. When the sun rose high on the following day and Dashi did not appear, the commander summoned Dashi's wife. She explained that her husband had fled, fearing that he had insulted the commander the previous night while drunk, but she refused to say where he had gone. Enraged, Nian Han wanted to punish her by forcing her to marry the lowliest member of the tribe. Defiantly she refused, openly berating him, until the furious Nian Han shot and killed her with an arrow.[34]

Dashi, however, managed to escape. According to the *Liao shi* he rejoined Tianzuo in the seventh month of 1124. There is no explanation in the *Liao shi* for Dashi's actions in the ten months that passed between the ninth month of 1123, when he ran away from the Jurchens, and this later date. The chronology is further complicated by the *Liao shi*'s assertion that Dashi was enthroned in the second month of the year *jiachen*, 1124, after he had already left Tianzuo.[35] Furthermore,

[29] *LS*, 29/346; *JS*, 2/41, 72/1650, 121/2636. [30] *JS*, 121/2636, 74/1702.
[31] *JS*, 121/2636; *BSJ*, 5691–2; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:28. [32] *BSJ*, 5692.
[33] The "double six" (*shuangliu*) game, a kind of backgammon, probably originated in the Near East, and was popular in China from the seventh to the twelfth centuries among Khitans and Chinese alike. The game was also considered a way to demonstrate prestige and to predict the political future of its participants. WF, 259, n. 77; R. A. Stein, "Leao-Tche," *T'oung Pao* 35 (1940), 105–8.
[34] *SMJW*, 1/7a; *QDGZ*, 19/184–85. [35] *LS*, 30/356.



according to the *Qidan guo zhi*, Dashi returned to Tianzuo with a certain number of troops that made the latter refer to Dashi's appearance as "heavenly help."[36] This does not coincide with the impression of Dashi's hasty escape from the Jin, but the explanation may lie in the developments in the Liao's fortune during Dashi's captivity. Soon after the Qingzhong debacle, in mid-1123, Tianzuo had elected to take refuge with the Xi Xia. The prince of Liang refused to follow him. With his retinue he went to the Wugu and Dilie tribes north of the Gobi and, gaining their support, was enthroned as another Northern Liao emperor. His coronation took place in the fifth month of 1123, when Dashi was still captive among the Jin.[37] Dashi's parting from the Jin, however, coincided with the death of the prince of Liang (tenth month, 1123) and the enthronement of his son, Yelü Zhulie, who was killed the following month by his own troops.[38] On his way back to Tianzuo, who had returned to Inner Mongolia in early 1124 after his dismissal by the Xi Xia emperor due to the latter's recent agreement with the Jin, Dashi had to pass through the territory of the prince of Liang. Some of the latter's followers might have decided to join Dashi on his way to Tianzuo,[39] thereby constituting the group that made that emperor speak of "heavenly help" upon Dashi's return.

Fortified by this reinforcement, as well as by his recent alliance with the Tatars,[40] Tianzuo was determined to attack the Jin. Dashi, however, was painfully aware of the unrealistic nature of this plan. He rebuked his emperor, claiming that whenever the Jurchens attacked the Khitans, Tianzuo chose to run away instead of confronting them. Due to this cowardly behavior, he said, most of the Liao territories had already fallen into Jin hands. Under these circumstances, going now into a full-scale confrontation with the Jurchens would be a bad strategy; it would be wiser to build up the army, wait for the right moment and only then act.[41]

Another argument against attack could have been the international situation: By early 1124 the Jin had secured alliances with both the Song and the Xi Xia, leaving the Liao without outside supporters.[42] When Tianzuo refused to heed his advice, Dashi feigned illness and did not go into battle. Besides the strategic differences with his monarch, he might have also feared for his life, since his record of divided loyalties could have made him a target for Tianzuo's wrath. In the second or seventh month of 1124 he then killed two of the emperor's generals, proclaimed himself king (*wang*) and appointed northern and southern officials. Leading 80 or

[36] *QDGZ*, 12/133; *LS*, 29/349. The sources might have confused Dashi's second return to Tianzuo with his first one in 1122, as claimed by Zi Ping (Zi Ping, "Yelü Dashi bei qi nian dai kao," *Lishi yanjiu* [1995], 171–5).
[37] *LS*, 29/347. The *Song mo ji wen*, and several Song sources quoting it, ascribed the prince's coronation to Dashi, claiming that after escaping Nian Han, Dashi had "penetrated deep into the sands" and enthroned the prince of Liang as emperor, while he himself served as his prime minister (*SMJW*, 1/7a; *QDGZ*, 19/184–5; *JY*, 1/12; cf. Li Xinchuan's doubts in his *Jiu wen zheng wu* [*CSJC* ed.], 4/614). This piece of information probably originated from a confusion of Dashi with another Khitan noble, Yelü Dilie, who did enthrone the prince of Liang according to Liao sources (*LS*, 29/347, 30/353, 114/1517).
[38] *LS*, 29/347. [39] JZA 1987, 48; but cf. JZA 1996, 27; *ZK*, 63. [40] *QDGZ*, 12/133.
[41] *LS*, 29/349; *QDGZ*, 12/133; *SC*, 21/5a–b. [42] Zi Ping, "Yelü Dashi," 172.

200 riders, Dashi abandoned Tianzuo's camp by night, thus embarking upon his independent career as a state builder.[43]

Dashi's earliest followers included several minor members of both the Yelü and Xiao clans, who filled important offices in the Western Liao administration. The nomination of northern and southern officials can imply that certain Chinese (governed by the southern administration in Liao times) were also among Dashi's first allies.[44]

When Dashi left Tianzuo, the notion of creating a successor state to the Liao had already been partly legitimized by the various transient Liao (Xi and Bohai) emperors who were crowned during Tianzuo's reign. Yet, despite his assertion that any of Abaoji's descendants had the right to rule, Dashi was not in a hurry to declare himself emperor. Unlike the other short-lived state founders, however, he succeeded in creating a well-established empire. The direction he chose to follow – going westward to the northwestern garrison city of Kedun – certainly contributed to this achievement.

## The Kedun period

Dashi's road after leaving Tianzuo is described in the *Liao shi* 30 as follows: "Going northward for three days, he crossed the Heishui (the black water), where he met Zhuangguer, the *Xiangwen*[45] of the White Tatars.[46] Zhuangguer presented him with 400 horses, 20 camels and several thousand sheep. He went westward and reached Kedun, stationing at Beiting duhufu."[47] This means that after leaving Tianzuo at the Jia mountains,[48] Dashi went about 150 km to the northwest till he reached the Aibi river (the Heishui), flowing near the center of the White Tatars' territory.[49] From there he went all the way to Kedun, the Liao's most important garrison town of the northwest on the Orkhon river in Mongolia.[50] Beiting *duhufu*

[43] *LS*, 30/355, 29/349; Juwaynī, 2:86–7, tr. Boyle, 354; cf. JZA 1984, 47; Zi Ping, "Yelü Dashi," 171–5.

[44] *LS*, 30/356–8; *XLSG*, 28.

[45] *Xiangwen* is a title of a tribal dignitary, translated by Hucker as "general" (C. O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* [Stanford, 1985], 234), whose functions are mostly military (WF, 129, n. 42, 518).

[46] The White Tatars (*Bai Dada*) are known as the Önggüd, a Turkic-speaking people who originated from the Shatou Turks. In Liao and Jin times they were located in modern Inner Mongolia, north of the Yin mountains, near modern Suiyuan, close to the Xi Xia–Jin border (WF, 631; *LSG*, 523).

[47] *LS*, 30/355. *LS*, 29/349 says only that Dashi went westward.

[48] The Jia mountains are located 60 *li* (about 30 km) north of Jin's Yunnei zhou, i.e., not far from Tiande commandery on the Tangut–Liao border, in the region of modern Wuzhuan county, Inner Mongolia, north of Hohot: Chen Dezhi, "Yelü Dashi bei zou shi di za kao," *Lishi dili* 1982/2, 51; Tan Qixiang (ed.), *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* (Shanghai, 1982), 6:10–11, 5/4.

[49] Chen Dezhi, "Dashi," 53–5, and see there for a full discussion of earlier identifications, e.g., Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:212; WF, 631; Haneda Toru, "Xi Liao jianguo shimo ji qi jinian" in *LSHB*, 9:76-156–76-157. The White Tatars' center was located in the Dening circuit of the Yuan dynasty. See Tan Qixiang, *Ditu ji*, 7:7–8, 6/4.

[50] For Kedun and its different possible locations see, e.g., Yanai Wataru, "Qidan Kedun cheng kao," in *LSHB*, 9:76-185–76-198; LYD, 17–20.



is a location in the vicinity of Kedun, probably the administrative center of the Liao forces in the Kedun region.[51]

Kedun had been established in 1004, following a successful expedition by Liao Shenzong's great-aunt against the Zubu, the most important tribe along the Liao's northwestern border, who were later known as the Tatars. A garrison of more then 20,000 tribal riders was stationed there, and was later reinforced by more than 700 banished families of Bohai, Jurchen and Han origin. Kedun was also called Zhenzhou, and the families were arranged in two other prefectures, Weizhou and Fengzhou.[52] Zhenzhou was identified in 1949 as one of the three settlements from different periods on the site known as Chin Tolgoyn Balgas ("Chin citadel") in Bulgan *aymag* (province) in northern Mongolia. The excavated geometrical layout of the city is suggestive of northern Chinese models, and the artifacts uncovered there include some of the earliest examples of the stone tortoise, which have been found in various localities in Mongolia, north China and the Amur region.[53] In addition to its military function, Kedun was also an important station in the southern trade route between north China (i.e., the Liao) and Central Asia.[54]

Despite abundant evidence of problems with the Zubu during the first half of the eleventh century and the western tribes' rebellion at the end of that century, it seems that after the uprising was finally quelled in 1102, Liao control of the northwest was not heavily damaged by the struggle with the Jurchens.[55] Kedun's isolated location (3,000 *li* from the Liao's supreme capital), and the desert that surrounded it, made it almost invincible to the Jin troops. With its sizable garrison and its good pastures, in which the Liao imperial horse herds still pastured, Kedun was the perfect place to implement what Dashi had urged Tianzuo to do: build up a force and wait for the right time to attack the Jurchens.[56]

Dashi's activities in Kedun are hard to follow, and setting them in a firm chronological framework is even harder. One of his first actions, however, reported to the Jin authorities as early as the tenth month of 1124, was to gain control of the Liao horse herds of the northwest. This act supplemented his forces by more than 10,000 horses, which were probably joined by their herders.[57] The capture of the horses was probably one of the results of Dashi's most important act in Kedun. This

[51] Chen Dezhi, "Dashi," 55–7; *XLSG*, 31; for earlier identifications of Beiting *duhufu*, see Ding Qian, "Xi Liao li guo benmo kao," in *Gu xue huigan*, first collection, 1; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1: 212; Haneda, "Xi Liao," 160; LYD, 21–4; Pelliot *Polo*, 1:223; WF, 634 n. 10; Tang Changru, "Yelü Dashi," 16; Abe Takeo, *Xi huihu*, 359–61; Zhou Liangxiao, "Guanyu Xi Liao de ji ge wenti," *Zhonghua wen shi lun cong* 3 (1981), 246–8.

[52] *LS*, 37/451, 14/158, 159; WF, 557; Yanai, "Qidan Kedun," 185 and *passim*; Haneda, "Xi Liao," 157–61; Chen Dezhi, "Dashi," 55–7.

[53] K. Scott, "Khitan Settlements in Northern Mongolia: New Light on the Social and Cultural History of the Pre-Chingisid Era," *Canada Mongolia Review* 1 (1975), 11–12. The stone tortoises served as pedestals for the stone steles on which were inscribed edicts of the central government.

[54] Zhang Yu, "Caoyuan Sichou zhi lu – Qidan yu Xi Yu," in Nei Menggu wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo (ed.), *Nei Menggu dongbu qu kaogu xue wenhua yanjiu ji* (Beijing, 1991), 114.

[55] For troubles with the Zubu in the early eleventh century see *LS*, 85/1315, 87/1331, 93/1373, 103/1447–8; WF, 557. For the Zubu rebellion (1092–1102) see WF, 593–4; Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 138–9.

[56] *XLSG*, 29; JZA 1994, 31.

[57] *LS*, 60/932; *JS*, 3/51, 121/2636; WF, 128, 632.

was his address to "the seven prefectures and the eighteen tribes" of the region, delivered in a speech at Beiting *duhufu*, a move which defined his political plan and secured him sizable reinforcements.

The seven prefectures mentioned in this context (Weiwu, Chongde, Huifan, Xin, Dalin, Zihe and Tuo) had not previously been mentioned in the *Liao shi* as Liao prefectures. Liang Yuandong, followed by later research, suggested that they were organized by Dashi for his followers and for the Kedun population. This act was in accord with Dashi's previous administrative concerns, attested by his nomination of northern and southern officials upon leaving Tianzuo.[58]

The eighteen tribes[59] also present problems: They are the Dahuang Shiwei,[60] Dila (Dilie),[61] Wangjila (Onggirad),[62] Chachila (Jajirad),[63] Yexi,[64] Bigude,[65] Nila,[66] Dalaguai,[67] Damili,[68] Mierji (Merkid),[69] Hezhu,[70] Wuguli,[71] Zubu

[58] *LS*, 30/355; LYD, 27. Creating new, "private" prefectures (*touxia junzhou*) was a rather common feature among the Liao princes, high officials and imperial relatives, who settled their dependents in them (WF, 45, 65, 634). *LSG* suggested that these prefectures included the tribes' pastures, and were, therefore, not fixed administrative territories but a looser framework (*LSG*, 527–8). The prefectures could have also been "private" prefectures established before the arrival of Dashi.

[59] *LS*, 30/355; WF, 634.

[60] The Dahuang (lit.: big yellow) Shiwei are a branch of the Shiwei confederation, from which the Mongols later emerged. Although originally residing in Manchuria, by later Liao times they were part of its northwestern route. In 1123 Tianzuo found refuge with this tribe, which by then had moved to the region of modern Suiyuan, east of the Xi Xia (WF, 88, 42, 552; LYD, 28).

[61] The Dilie were an important tribe, located in eastern Mongolia, between the Zubu (to its west) and the Wugu (to its east), which often caused trouble on the Liao's western borders. It was one of the tribes among which Tianzuo and then the prince of Liang found refuge in the 1120s. It might be identified with Rashīd al-Dīn's Tereit (PH, 8; LYD, 28–9; Deng Guangming et al. [eds.], *Liao*, 170). Pikov, probably following Bretschneider, identified them with Rashīd al-Dīn's Telengut. (*ZK*, 68; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:213).

[62] This important tribe lived in northeastern Mongolia (PH, 402–6, 408; LYD, 29). While its location on the eve of Chinggis Khan's rise is fairly well known, it is mentioned in the *Liao shi* solely in connection to Dashi.

[63] This Mongol tribe, famous as that of Jamugha (Chinggis's *anda* and bitter rival), lived north of the Kerulen river and in the upper reaches of the Onon and the Kerulen (PH, 28–9; LYD, 29; WF, 95).

[64] The location of this tribe, which is mentioned in the *Liao shi* only in connection to Dashi, is unknown. Pikov suggested identifying it with Rashīd al-Dīn's Yesüt, the tribe of Chinggis's famous general, Jebe (ZK, 68; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 550; see also LYD, 29).

[65] One of the Liao's outer tribes whose tributary relations with the Liao were rather close. Its exact location is not attested, but Liang Yuandong assumed it to be near the Wugu, Dilie and Wuguo, and that it might have migrated westward to Outer Mongolia following the rise of the Jurchens (LYD, 29; WF, 98, 109).

[66] This is another tribe mentioned solely in this place. See LYD, 30.

[67] This may be identical with the Dalagu mentioned in *LS* 40. This tribe was located north of the Sungari river in Manchuria, but it might have had a western branch or might have migrated westward following the rise of the Jurchen (WF, 111; LYD, 30). Pikov suggested identifying this tribe with Rashīd al-Dīn's Tārqudāi (*ZK*, 68; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 220).

[68] This may be identical to the Damaili mentioned in the *Liao shi*, which was located on the Kerulen river, near the Dilie (LYD, 30). Pikov suggested identifying it with Rashīd al-Dīn's Tamghālīq, about which Rashīd only said that it belonged to the Mongol tribes (*ZK*, 68; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:26).

[69] The Merkids were situated in the Lower Selenge river in Mongolia, north of the Kereyids (WF, 100; LYD, 31).

[70] Unidentified. See LYD, 31.

[71] Identical with the Wugu, who lived in eastern Mongolia and are often closely associated with the Dilie. Originally, one of Kedun's aims was to guard the Liao against them (WF, 92; LYD, 31–4; Deng Guangming et al. [eds.], *Liao*, 216; *LS*, 37/451).



(Tatars),[72] Pusuwan,[73] Tanggu,[74] Humusi,[75] Xidi and Jiuerbi[76]. While some of these are well-known tribes, such as the Zubu, Merkid and Dilie, others are mentioned solely in this place. Most of them resided in Mongolia but some were originally from Manchuria, and the location of others is unknown. It is also hard to determine how many of the tribesmen indeed joined Dashi following his speech (most of the Wugu and Dilie, for example, surrendered to the Jin).

The *Liao shi* quotes Dashi's address as follows:[77]

> My ancestors founded a vast empire, and had to endure many trials. Nine emperors have successively reigned over it for two hundred years. Now the Jin, who are subjects of our dynasty, massacre our people and destroy our cities. Our emperor, Tianzuo, has been constrained to flee shamefully and abandon the empire, being continually in trouble. Now, relying on the justice of my cause, I went westward.[78] I have come to ask your[79] assistance for the extermination of our common enemy and the reestablishment of our empire. I am sure you are filled with compassion for our distress. Can you see without remorse the destruction of the altars of grain?[80] No doubt you will help our emperor and father, nor will you look indifferently upon the misery of our people.

The speech can be understood either as an introductory speech following Dashi's arrival at Kedun, in which he tried to gain support from the local tribes and population, or as a farewell speech given before leaving Kedun and going westward. The second interpretation is allegedly implied by the *Liao shi*'s assertion that in the year that followed the speech Dashi went westward.[81] However, the *Liao shi*'s chronology is fairly inaccurate, and one should note at least two points related to the speech's contents: First, Dashi speaks as if Tianzuo is still alive and reigning, i.e., before the latter's capture by the Jin in 1125 or at least before his death in 1128. Second, Dashi is speaking in egalitarian terms, not as an emperor addressing his

[72] The biggest tribe in Liao's northwest, which often caused trouble for the Khitans. It was located west of Kedun (WF, 101–2; LYD, 34).

[73] Unidentified.

[74] This is not identical with the Tanguts, which were treated as a country (*guo*) and not as a tribe. It refers to a clan of the Dangxiang tribe whose various branches (northern, southern etc.) are mentioned in *LS*, 33/388. This tribe lived north of the Tangut realm, except for its northern branch which resided in Jilin, Manchuria (*LSG*, 527–8; *XLSG*, 32).

[75] Situated south or southwest of the Orkhon river, west of the Zubu (WF, 99; LYD, 35).

[76] The last two tribes are also unidentified.

[77] *LS*, 30/355–6; Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:213–14. I have followed his translation with slight changes.

[78] The Chinese text (*wo jin zheng yi er xi* ) can also be read "Now, relying on the justice of my cause, I *am going to go* westward."

[79] The Chinese text reads *fan*. This term is usually translated as "barbarians" (and the sentence could therefore be translated as "I will ask the barbarians' help," which could relate to the Central Asian states). Yet in Liao terminology *fan* did not have a derogatory meaning. It designated the tribal population, especially that of the Khitan tribes but sometimes also of other tribes, and could therefore be understood as Dashi's calling upon his listeners, as translated above (WF, 54 but cf. WF, 635; see also R. W. Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh Century Xia* [Honolulu, 1996], xv, 26, 41, 43, 69, 96, 98–9, where *fan* is used by both Tanguts and Jurchens to designate themselves, in contrast to *han*, which signifies the Chinese).

[80] I.e., the dynasty.

[81] *LS*, 30/356. Wittfogel and Feng, as well as Pikov, all agree to this interpretation and therefore date the speech to 1129, a year before Dashi left Kedun (1130, and see below) (WF, 635; *ZK*, 68).

subjects.[82] Furthermore, most of Dashi's efforts in Kedun were indeed channeled towards accomplishing the plan he had expressed in his speech: to restore the Liao by destroying the Jin, and this is much more apparent in the Kedun period than after he had gone westward. For all these reasons I have dated the speech to 1124, seeing it as an introductory statement of Dashi's goals.[83] It is hard to determine whether this speech refers to Dashi's intention to move westward into Central Asia, or if the "going westward" simply refers to his move to Kedun.

In trying to implement his political plan Dashi turned to two channels: the diplomatic and the military.

The first among whom Dashi looked for allies were the Xi Xia. The Xi Xia had supported the Liao in the latter's struggle with the Jin, offering Tianzuo refuge and military help, till necessity forced them to come to terms with the Jin. In early 1124 the Xi Xia signed a peace treaty with the Jin, became their vassals and promised to stop their aid to the Liao court. In return they obtained possession of certain territories in the former Liao lands, especially in Shaanxi. However, the Jin's failure to honor their territorial commitments was a source of continuous tension between the two states, which resulted in several military clashes along their border in the 1120s–1130s. This situation also encouraged the Tanguts to take advantage of the prolonged Song–Jin war (1126–41) – despite having signed a treaty in 1125, according to which they committed themselves to helping the Jin in their struggle against the Song.[84]

In 1125 the Jin general Wanyan Xiyin reported that following Tianzuo's capture, the Xi Xia had sent a messenger to conclude an alliance with Dashi, and that they might cooperate in taking Shaanxi's cities, a possibility that the Jin emperor regarded as highly perilous.[85] Jin troops were sent to Shaanxi and they captured people and cattle from originally Tangut regions, a fact that aroused the Xi Xia's resentment.[86] The fear of a possible alliance between the Xi Xia and Dashi also prevented the Jin general Nian Han from evacuating Shaanxi and participating in the quelling of a rebellion in Hebei around 1127.[87] Despite the attested Jin alertness to a possible Khitan–Tangut coalition, there is no indication that such an alliance between Dashi and the Xi Xia actually existed, and if it did, how firm it was. Indeed, in 1126 a Song official from the Lin and Fu routes of the Xia–Jin–Song border region reported that Dashi's forces "north of the Xia" numbered 100,000 men, and this could imply a lack of objection by the Tangut to Dashi's recruitment efforts on their northern border.[88] But the only direct evidence in regard to Dashi's relations with the Xi Xia points in the opposite direction. In 1129 Dashi's emissaries to the Song court were detained by the Tanguts, probably due to the Tangut–Song

[82] JZA 1994, 31; cf. WF, 635.
[83] For a dating of the speech to 1124 see also *XLSG*, 31; Zi Ping, "Yelü Dashi," 173; JZA 1994, 31; JZA 1996, 27–8.
[84] For Xi Xia relations with the Song and Jin in this period see *XXJ*, 530–60; Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," 197; Wu Tianchi, *Xi Xia shi gao* (Chengdu, 1983), 112–14.
[85] *JS*, 121/2637, 73/1684. [86] *XXJ*, 536. [87] *JS*, 74/1698; WF, 633.
[88] *SC*, 58/7a; *ZK*, 67. The text reads "the Linya Xiao Taishi," which is probably a misreading of Yelü Dashi.



tension in the second half of this year.[89] In 1130 a Jin commander again reported on a probable alliance between Dashi and the Xi Xia. The Tanguts firmly denied any such association, and in the following year the Jurchens had to apologize to the Xi Xia for their unfounded suspicions.[90]

There is a little more conclusive evidence for Dashi's attempts to conclude an alliance with the Song. Soon after the Liao had collapsed, the Jurchens turned against their former allies, and were able to swiftly take over most of north China. The war dragged on till 1141, during which time many Song officials regretted their previous decision to ally themselves with the Jurchens against the Khitans.[91] Under these circumstances, a new Liao–Song connection might not have been a far-fetched idea. In 1126, following Song Huizong's[92] abdication, the Song commander of the Lin and Fu prefectures on the Jin–Song–Xia border reported that Dashi and his men had made placards proclaiming that the Jin people were immoral and suggesting that the new Song emperor restore the old Khitan–Han friendship by joining forces to attack the Jin and reestablish the Liao. The Song commander who received this report, Wu Min, approved of it, memorialized the emperor and ordered his men to send a letter in response.[93] Indeed, in the same year (1126) the Song seem to have sent a letter to Dashi, together with another one addressed to Yelü Yudu, a renegade Khitan general who led the Khitan crack troops in the Jin army.[94] Both letters, however, were turned over to Jin forces by the Song Khitan messenger and never reached their destinations.[95] Several Song officials argued in the following years (1128, 1129, 1131–2) that the Song should renew their former alliance with the Khitans by contacting Yelü Dashi, whom they saw as the Liao legitimate successor,[96] but nothing seems to have materialized out of these initiatives. In 1129 Dashi made a more serious attempt to collaborate with the Song, when his emissaries from Zhaozhou (south of modern Ulaan Baatar) were sent to the Song court. The messengers were detained by the Tanguts, but one of them managed to escape and report his mission to Zhang Jun, the Song governor of Shaanxi and Sichuan.[97] Again, there is no evidence that this mission had practical results.

A more productive alliance, but only in the short run, was created between Dashi and the Tatars in 1127, perhaps following his first failure to ally with the Song.

[89] Zhang Jun, *Zhang Weigong zou yi*, in *Yongle da dian* (Beijing, 1959), 10876/17; *XLSG*, 35. For Song–Xia clashes in 1129 see *XXJ*, 548–9.
[90] *JS*, 121/2637; WF, 636; *XXJ*, 550.
[91] For the Song–Jin war, see, e.g., Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 226–34; *JCS*, 93–194.
[92] Song Huizong (r. 1100–25) was the Song emperor during the last days of the Liao. He was held responsible for the strategy of allying the Jin against the Liao, as well as for the Song failure to hold north China. See, e.g., Deng Guangming et al. (eds.), *Liao*, 284–5.
[93] *SC*, 58/6b–7a; *DJGZ*, 4/34; WF, 633.
[94] *SC*, 58/6b–7a, 8a, 9a; *DJGZ*, 4/33; *JS*, 60/1394; *JY*, 1/16, and see there for Li Xinchuan's reservations about the authenticity of the letter to Dashi; WF, 633.
[95] *Ibid.*; *JS*, 74/1696, 1698, 1704.
[96] *SC*, 98/15a (Zhao Zidi, 1128); *JY*, 28/561 (Wang Zao, 1129); *SC*, 148/9a ff. (the same Wang Zao, 1131/2).
[97] Zhang Jun, *Zhang Weigong*, 10876/17; *XLSG*, 35. On Zhang Jun see his biography in H. Franke (ed.), *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden, 1976–8), 1:13–15.

Dashi convinced the Tatars to stop selling horses to the Jin, thereby cutting off one of the Jurchens' main sources of mounts. The Jin were quick to respond: they detained the Tatars' heir apparent in Yunzhong, and shortly afterwards, probably in 1128, the embargo on horses was abolished. Later, the Tatars even agreed to lead Jin forces into Dashi's lands in return for the release of their heir apparent. There is no subsequent information about Dashi–Tatar relations.[98]

Dashi's diplomatic efforts in Kedun were not very productive, but he seems to have been more successful in enlarging his troops. Those included his initial supporters; the garrison troops stationed in Kedun, who were still sizable even if they probably did not reach the 20,000 men stationed there in the days of Liao glory; and the more than 10,000 soldiers he gained from the eighteen tribes following his speech. Later he continued to recruit people, but a Song official's estimate in 1126 that his forces amounted to 100,000 men[99] seems exaggerated, perhaps due to the official's attempt to convince his superiors to ally with Dashi. In 1128 a Song envoy coming back from the Jin spoke about several tens of thousands of horses and men, who were looking for an opportunity to raise forces.[100]

The increase in his power enabled Dashi to take his first aggressive step against the Jin: In 1129 he took over two camps of Jin northern tribes. It is hard to evaluate the real dimensions of this act in geographical or strategical terms,[101] but Poluhuo, the Jin commander who reported this incident, certainly took it seriously. Poluhuo expressed his fear that it would be hard to control Dashi from then on, especially since he was close to the Jin's horse herds, and thus suggested sending a garrison to the border. The Jin emperor preferred to use only scouts and patrols, not wanting to mobilize the tribes for these two camps.[102] The Jurchens reacted more severely to the new Khitan threat only when Dashi's expansionist intentions became apparent in the following year.

Indeed, despite Dashi's modest achievements in Kedun, by 1129–30 Jin power was much stronger than it had been in 1124. The Jurchens had not only eliminated the Liao completely, but also conquered most of north China from the Song and made the Tanguts their vassals. Despite the ongoing tension or even war between the Jin, Song and Xi Xia, none of the eastern Asian states showed interest in joining forces with Dashi against the Jurchens, as proved by the failure of his diplomatic missions. Dashi's own resources at Kedun were certainly not sufficient for a decisive battle, and he might easily have concluded that more provocations, such as the attack on the two camps, would sooner or later result in a military response by the Jin. In order to confront the Jin, Dashi had to broaden his economic and military basis. No less important, in order to preserve his authority among his

[98] *JY*, 181/3017; WF, 633. Those Tatars are probably not identical with the Zubu, who were allied to Dashi after his Beiting speech, but represent a more eastern branch of this confederation.
[99] *SC*, 58/7a. [100] *SC*, 98/15a.
[101] Poluhuo was stationed in Taizhou, west of the junction of the Sungari and Nonni rivers in Manchuria, yet it is rather unlikely that Dashi got that far. In Liao terminology *ying* (camp) can refer to a unit of 200 to 3,500 men (*LS*, 36/434, 28/336; WF, 555, 569–70). I did not find a specific reference to the term in Jin military terminology.
[102] *JS*, 121/2637; WF, 634; *XLSG*, 35; JZA 1987, 49.



newly acquired followers, Dashi had to be able to reward them for their support. For these two ends, moving westward seemed to be the more promising option.

The allure of Central Asia lay not only in its richer resources as compared to Mongolia, but also in its control of the commercial routes and, more significantly, in the relative weakness of the Central Asian states *vis-à-vis* the Jurchens' power. Central Asia was not dominated by a single empire. Besides the different tribes, the main kingdoms were those of the Uighur dynasty of Gaochang (near modern Turfan, in Xinjiang), whose people were known as traders and culture-bearers rather than as warriors, and the Qarakhanids, divided from 1041 between the eastern khanate (Kashgar, Balāsāghūn) and the western one (centered in Transoxania). From the end of the eleventh century onward the two Qarakhanid kingdoms were tributaries of the Saljūq sultans, who were based in Iraq and Iran.[103] Both the Uighurs and the Qarakhanids had maintained close commercial and diplomatic ties with the Liao empire, and the Qarakhanids even established matrimonial relations.[104] Through these channels Dashi could have gained information about their relative strength. Moreover, it seems as if raids from the Liao borders to the Qarakhanid realm and vice versa were not uncommon at the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth.[105] Such raids were probably not undertaken by Liao garrisons (the *Liao shi* never mentions them) but by border tribes, apparently including some of the tribes that had joined Dashi. Those tribes could serve as another means through which Dashi gained information about the situation in the west. They might have also reported on potential allies there, since certain Khitans had taken the road westward before Dashi.

## Khitans in the west before the Qara Khitai

The rise of the Khitans and their occupation of Mongolia set in motion many Turkic and Mongol tribes.[106] Muslim sources also report on some migration of the Khitans themselves into the Islamic realm before Dashi's time.

The most voluminous movement took place in the second decade of the eleventh century. "The Turks from China," reported at 100,000 or even more than 300,000 men, most of them Khitans, were encouraged to go westward by the weakening of the Qarakhanid state due to the poor health of its ruler, Tughan Khan (r. 998–1018). They advanced until they were only eight days' march from the Qarakhanid capital, but when they heard that Tughan Khan had recovered and was recruiting troops from the lands of Islam, most of them returned eastward. Their rear guard

[103] On Central Asia on the eve of the Khitans' arrival see the introduction and the references there.
[104] For Liao relations with the Uighurs and the Qarakhanids see Wei Liangtao, "Halahan wangchao yu Song, Liao ji Gaochang Huihu de guanxi," *Zhongya xuekan* 1 (1983), 212–23; Zhang Yu, "Caoyuan Sichouzhilu," 110–18; Qian Boquan, "Dashi yu Liao chao de jiaowang he Yelü Dashi de xi zheng," *Zhongguo gudai shi (er)*, 1995/6, 24–31; Sinor, "The Kitan," 227–42.
[105] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; Marwazī/Minorsky, 19, tr. 29.
[106] About these migrations see, e.g., Golden, *Introduction*, 164–5 and the references there.

stayed in Balāsāghūn for three months, after which they were taken by Tughan Khan, who captured and killed many of them, thus acquiring also some distinctive Chinese goods.[107]

Another raid that might have been connected to the former episode is 'Awfī's undated account of the attack of the Khan of Chīn, son of SWYGY, on Tamghaj Khan of Kashgar, despite their former alliance. The Khan of Chīn was encouraged to raid Kashgar when he heard about Tamghaj Khan's lack of alertness. Again, the Qarakhanid ruler managed to check this threat, using local forces, and many Khitans were taken captive.[108]

Ibn al-Athīr reports that when Dashi arrived in Central Asia, 10,000 Khitans who already resided there chose to join him. These Khitans had been subjugated by the Western Qarakhanid ruler, Arslan Khan Muḥammad son of Sulaymān (r. 1102–30), and served in his armies. After their number had grown, and Arslan Khan had tried to prevent them from seeing their wives, they moved to the region of Balāsāghūn, where they were subject to several attacks by Arslan Khan.[109] Another important way in which the Khitans were brought to the Islamic lands was as slaves, famous for their beauty.[110]

Another possible indication of the pre-Qara Khitai western migration of the Khitans, although not to the Muslim world, is suggested by the name of one of the Qipchaq princes, Kitanopa. Kitanopa was killed in 1103 during a Russian campaign against the Qipchaqs.[111] Even before that, a Cuman emissary sent to the great prince of Kiev in 1095 was called Kitan.[112]

In all the cases referred to above, it is hard to determine whether these references to the Khitans make use of this identification as an ethnic name or as a political term (i.e., people subordinated, or who had been subordinated to the Khitans). The fact that none of these tribal movements is mentioned in the *Liao shi* supports the second opinion. Moreover, the first episode mentioned above might have been connected to the rebellion of the Zubu tribe in 1012. This rebellion started near the region of Kedun and soon encompassed all the border tribes. It was quelled by the Liao

[107] Ibn al-Athīr, 9:297; al-'Utbī, *Ta'rīkh Yamīnī* (Cairo, 1908/9), 2:220 (dated in both to 1017–18); Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj . . . commonly known as Bar Hebraeus*, tr. E. A. W. Budge (London, 1932), 186 (1014); Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 233 (1012/13).

[108] 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'al-ḥikāyāt wa-lawāmi' al-riwāyāt," MS BM OR 2676, fols. 231a–232a, reproduced in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 94–7. It is very tempting to connect this episode with Dashi's defeat at Kashgar in the early 1130s, but I was unable to date this episode.

[109] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. Barthold, followed by Pikov, connected this migration to the coming to Balāsāghūn of "the Turks from Tibet," who according to Ḥaydarī submitted to the Qarakhanids at Balāsāghūn in 1041/2 but refused to accept Islam (Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 234; V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* [Leiden, 1962], 1:101; *ZK*, 74). Ibn al-Athīr, however, certainly refers to a later period, as proven by the Khan he mentioned. This later migration might also be echoed in Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 49.

[110] Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh-i Mu'īnī," MS SPb C 381, fol. 157b; al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla al-Saljūkiyya* (*Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*) (Lahore, 1933), 150.

[111] P. B. Golden, "Cumanica IV: The Tribes of the Cuman-Qipchaqs," *AEMA* 9 (1995–7), 113; D. Sinor, "Western Information on the Kitans and Some Related Questions," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995), 266.

[112] Sinor, "Western Information," 266.



noble Yelü Huage in 1013, but many Zubu tribesmen escaped westward. Huage pursued them and became involved with the Qarakhanid army, which had also been sent against the invaders. According to the Chinese version, Huage captured many Qarakhanid soldiers, but when he found out that his prisoners belonged to Liao's allies, he quickly released them.[113] Thus both ethnic and political Khitans were involved in this incident. The later Khitan movement might have been related to the Zubus' rebellion of 1098–1102.[114]

One should also mention other migrations from the Chinese border to Central Asia, which, although not ascribed directly to the Khitans, were probably affected by their actions. One is the movement of a reported force of 700,000 horsemen, usually identified as members of the Mongol Naiman tribe, whose arrival in the Kashgar region is mentioned in a letter from the Nestorian metropolitan to his patriarch in 1046.[115] They might have been connected with the "Turks from Tibet" who in 1042/3 surrendered to the Qarakhanid ruler of Balāsāghūn.[116] Another movement is the migration of the Qun and the Qay around 1030–50, motivated by "fear [of] the Qitā khan."[117]

The same channels that enabled Dashi to gain information about the situation in the west could also supply him with data about potential allies there. Yet despite those allies and despite the relative weakness of the Central Asian states, the Khitans' journey to the west was not an easy one. Nor was it an easy task to reconstruct their route from Kedun to Central Asia.

## The journey to the west

Several scholars have tackled the problem of defining Dashi's route westward, not infrequently suggesting one reconstruction only to put forward a new one a few years later.[118] Yet none of them, including the present writer, could provide a definite chronological and geographical description of the route taken by Dashi from Kedun to Balāsāghūn. The contradictory accounts in the *Liao shi* and Juwaynī, together with the inconsistent reports of other Muslim and Chinese sources, most of them very vague chronologically, cannot easily be combined to

[113] Wei Liangtao, "Halahan wangchao," 219, 221; *LS*, 15/169, 171, 173, 174, 176, 178, 180, 94/1381; WF, 587.

[114] See note 55 above.

[115] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 205; Golden, *Introduction*, 274.

[116] Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 234.

[117] Marwazī/Minorsky, 18, 29, 95–100, 104; Golden, *Introduction*, 276; *ZK*, 72; cf. O. Pritsak, "Two Migratory Movements in the Eurasian Steppe in the 9th–11th Centuries," *Proceedings of the 26th Congress of Orientalists* (New Delhi, 1968), 2:158–62.

[118] For recent reconstructions see, e.g., *XLSYJ*, 67–70; *XLSG*, 36–42; JZA 1987, *passim*; JZA 1994, *passim*; JZA 1996, 33–45; Yu Dajun, "Yelü Dashi baojian Xi Liao diguo guocheng ji jinian xin tan," *Liao Jin shi lunji* 3 (1987), 234–52; Qian Boquan, "Yelü Dashi xixing luxian yanjiu," *Xiyu yanjiu* 1999/3, 33–41; K. D. Dzhusaev, "Marshrut pokhoda Eloj Dashi," *Pis'mennye pamiatniki i problemy istorii kul'tury narodov vostoka* 22 (1988), 94–9; *ZK*, 75–86. Among the above-mentioned articles, Wei in *XLSG* and Ji in JZA 1994 are by far the most serious attempts. For the difficulties in reconstructing Dashi's moves see, e.g., Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:222–3; WF, 623–4.

form one unequivocal narrative. The tentative scenario suggested below is based upon two main facts. The first is that the only definite date connected with this period appears in the *Jin shi*. According to this, in the ninth month of 1131 the Uighurs sent to the Jin troops some of Dashi's men who were caught in Gaochang (Hezhou).[119] The second is the *Liao shi*'s indication that in 1131 or 1132 Dashi for the first time took a reign title, Yanqing ("receiving good luck"), meaning that it was a year of considerable achievement.[120] This is important since most of the information about Dashi's acts in those years reflects defeats rather than triumphs.

On the day *jiawu* in the second month of the year *jiachen* (March 13, 1130),[121] Dashi sacrificed a gray ox and a white horse, and began his march out of Kedun.[122] It is uncertain whether he took all his men from Kedun at this stage, or just how many of his supporters followed him: Although contingents of the Dila tribe are attested among his adherents, his alliance with the eighteen tribes did not oblige them to follow him.[123] Juwaynī's assertion that, after many Turkic tribes had joined Dashi at Emil, his power grew to 40,000 households,[124] suggests that Dashi left Kedun with 10,000–20,000 men at the most. This group included several Khitan notables of the Yelü and Xiao clans, and was rather diverse ethnically, including at least Khitan and Mongol components, and perhaps also Chinese.[125] Herds and families seem to have been included in this migration as well.[126]

Dashi's first step was probably to go northward to the Qyrghyz of the Yenisei region. This was the most obstacle-free direction open to him, and the Qyrghyz were by then weakened by their fights with the Uighurs. Yet either because even the weakened Qyrghyz managed to harass the Khitans, or due to the weather, the Khitans soon moved westward, following the tribes that crossed the Altai mountains to the even less inhabited region of the Irtish and Emil rivers.[127] On the banks of the Emil the Khitans built a town and secured their first base.[128] However, this was a small one, and Dashi certainly needed a firmer economic basis for his men. It was probably from Emil that he wrote a letter to the Uighur ruler of Gaochang, Bilge Khan, asking permission to pass through his territory in the name of the former Khitan–Uighur friendship. After receiving the letter, the Uighur ruler welcomed Dashi in his palace and accompanied him to the borders

[119] *JS*, 3/63. [120] *LS*, 30/357; WF, 621.
[121] *LS*, 30/356; for the date see LYD, 38; WF, 622; also *XLSG*, 36; *ZK*, 70; cf. Zhou Liangxiao, "Xi Liao," 249–50; JZA 1994, 32.
[122] *LS*, 30/357. [123] *Ibid.*; JZA 1994, 33.
[124] Juwaynī, 2:86, tr. Boyle, 354. The Emil river is located south of Chuguchak, flowing into the Ala Kul. The city of Emil, built later by Dashi (see below), existed at least till the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it was the appanage of the Mongol Qa'an Güyüg (1246–8) and his descendants (Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 43; M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* [Richmond, 1997], 20, 38, 77, 97).
[125] *LS*, 30/356–8; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; al-Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah* (Tehran, 1954), 45.
[126] See, e.g. Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:261; *LS*, 30/356.
[127] Juwaynī, 2:86, tr. Boyle, 354; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 49; S. Akhsīkandī, "Majmū' al-tawārīkh," MS SPb B667, fol. 28b; JZA 1994, 33.
[128] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355.



of his state, offering him animals and even delivering some of his descendants as hostages, thereby declaring his vassalage.[129] Indeed, in 1130 Jin forces were told that Dashi was at Hezhou (Gaochang).[130]

Dashi's aim at this stage, as he told Bilge Khan, were the *Dashi*, i.e., the Muslims. He therefore continued from Gaochang to Kashgar. There, however, he was defeated by the forces of the Qarakhanid Aḥmad son of Ḥasan, after a fierce battle in which Dashi lost at least one of his generals. Ibn al-Athīr dated this battle to 1128, but in Sanjar's letter of 1133 the Muslim victory is reported as a recent event. It is, therefore, quite possible that it took place in summer 1131.[131] Dashi retreated back to Gaochang, but at this stage the Uighurs were less enthusiastic about him. It was then that they captured some of his men, who reached the Jin court in the ninth month of 1131.[132]

The Jurchens were aware of the danger of Dashi's expansion plans, and at last they decided to act seriously against his base at Kedun. The *Jin shi* explicitly says that the Jurchens sent their forces westward only *after* hearing about Dashi's flight.[133] Preparations for the campaign must have started by 1130,[134] though the Jin forces reached the vicinity of Kedun only in 1131. To head this campaign the Jin had chosen a Liao turncoat, Yelü Yudu, due to his familiarity with the former Khitan "lairs." Yet his Khitan descent also laid him open to suspicions of collaboration with Dashi. The Jurchens therefore gave him as companions two renowned and loyal warriors, Bolisu of the Jin imperial clan and Shi Jianu, who was related to the Jin by marriage, both old hands in north China battles.[135] Difficulties were apparent from the very beginning: Shi Jianu, whose mission was to recruit the tribal forces for the campaign, found that they refused to join the Jin troops. He himself fell sick, and returned in the middle of the journey, not even trying to reach Kedun.[136] It was then that Yudu heard that Dashi was in Hezhou. Since in 1130 Yudu was still stationed in Yunzhong, the expedition must have been delayed for a while, but in 1131, perhaps after hearing from the Uighurs that Dashi was going back, Yudu led 10,000 or 20,000 Jurchen and Chinese soldiers to Kedun.[137]

[129] *LS*, 30/356. The order Qyrghyzia, Uighuria and Turkestan for Dashi's activities is attested by Rashīd al-Dīn (Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 236), and implied by "Majmū' al-tawārīkh," which describes going to the Irtish and then to Hami (Akhsīkandī, "Majmū' al-tawārīkh," fol. 28b). Cf. Qian Boquan,"Yelü Dashi," 39.
[130] *JS*, 121/2637.
[131] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83; "Alfī," fol. 101; *Inshā'* in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 37–8; *XLSG*, 39. Following Ibn al-Athīr, Barthold, and after him Bosworth, supposed that the battle of Kashgar was not fought by Dashi's forces and that the Khitans left China via two routes, a southern one, through Kashgar, led by "the one-eyed Chinese" mentioned by Ibn al-Athīr, and a northern one, led by Dashi. (V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* [Leiden, 1962], 1:101; V. V. Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens* [Berlin, 1935], 122; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 148). Yet Chinese sources never mention two migrations, and it is, therefore, much more probable that the Khitans in Kashgar belonged to Dashi's troops (WF, 621–2; *ZK*, 74–5; *XLSG*, 39; JZA 1996, 42–3). Cf. Zhao Lisheng, "Xi Liao shi xin zheng," *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 1987/4, 139–40; Qian Boquan, "Yelü Dashi," 39.
[132] *JS*, 3/63; *XLSG*, 39–40; WF, 637. [133] *JS*, 120/2614. [134] *JS*, 121/2637; *JY*, 47/854.
[135] *JS*, 121/2637, 120/2614, 72/1665. [136] *JS*, 120/2614, 121/2637.
[137] Xiong Ke, *Zhongxing xiao ji* (*CSJC* ed.), 10/123; *DJGZ*, 6/102, 7/63; *JY*, 43/786.

Yudu and his troops did not have an easy mission: Kedun was far away and the road was hard. The people of Shaanxi and Hedong, among whom Yudu looked for porters to carry the plentiful provisions needed for such a journey, had tired of taking part in Jin adventures and had no motivation to join the forces; in addition the routes were filled with bandits.[138] To make things worse, on his way to Kedun Yudu lost the golden tablet of authority given to him by the Jin. This was taken as a sign of disloyalty, and the Jurchens reacted by detaining his wife and children as hostages at Yunzhong.[139]

The expedition ended in failure: It is unclear whether there was any contact between the two forces, though the *Qidan guo zhi* reported that Yelü Yudu sent people to open negotiations with Dashi and then retreated without battle.[140] When Yudu reached Kedun, Dashi had already left, but logistical problems restrained him from chasing Dashi any further. His exhausted army was unable to establish the military-agricultural colonies (*tuntian*) that Yudu had intended to found in Kedun, and most of his men disbanded, some of them going "north of the desert," i.e., to Mongolia and the Yenisei region, perhaps even finding their way to Dashi's camp.[141] Yudu himself came back, but a year later, in the ninth month of 1132, he rebelled against the Jurchens in the name of the Khitan cause.[142]

It is hard to determine whether Dashi returned to the vicinity of Kedun due to Yudu's expected arrival, about which he might have received information through his allies at Kedun or through the Uighurs. But he must have been close enough to take advantage of Yudu's desperate withdrawal. Though this retreat was caused mainly by logistical problems, it could have been portrayed as a huge victory over the strong Jurchens. After Yudu had gone, Dashi probably came back to Emil, perhaps strengthened by some of Yudu's men. In Emil many "Turks and tribes" gathered around him, enlarging his forces to 40,000 households.[143] Dashi celebrated his achievement by taking his first reign title and conferring honorific titles upon dignitaries, relatives and ancestors.[144] It was probably there at Emil in 1131 or 1132 that Dashi's followers enthroned him as Gürkhan, "universal Khan," and as Chinese emperor, named Tianyou ("protected by Heaven").[145]

While the title of Chinese emperor was a direct continuation of Liao titles, the title Gürkhan is unattested before Dashi's time. The meaning of this title, universal Khan or the Khan of Khans, is demonstrated in Muslim and Mongol sources. Its Inner Asian connotation is also clear, but its exact etymology is still an open

[138] Xiong Ke, *Zhongxing xiao ji*, 10/23; *JY*, 43/786.
[139] *QDGZ*, 19/184; *SMJW*, 1/9a; *JY*, 43/786. For tablets of authority see pp. 114–15.
[140] *QDGZ*, 19/184–5.
[141] Xiong Ke, *Zhongxing xiao ji*, 10/123; *DJGZ*, 7/63–4, 14/107; *JY*, 47/854; *JS*, 121/6327.
[142] On Yudu's rebellion see, e.g., *JS*, 133/2846; *SMJW*, 1/10a–11b; *QDGZ*, 19/184; S. Jagchid, "Kitan Struggle against Jurchen Oppression: Nomadism versus Sinicization," in S. Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies* (Provo, 1988), 37–8; *JCS*, 151–3.
[143] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355. [144] *LS*, 30/357.
[145] *XLSG*, 40; see also WF, 622–3; Tang Changru, "Yelü Dashi," 17; Zhou Liangxiao, "Xi Liao," 251; Ding Qian, "Xi Liao li guo benmo kao," 1b–2a; Haneda, "Xi Liao," 162; Yu Dajun, "Yelü Dashi," 247; JZA 1987, 49; cf. *ZK*, 65–6; JZA 1994, 31; JZA 1996, 31, 33.



question.[146] Taken together with that of the Chinese emperor, however, the new title reflects the dual legitimization, Chinese and Inner Asian, of the Qara Khitai.

After his tight schedule in the previous two years, Dashi now moved more slowly and strengthened his forces, building a reputation as a regional power, gradually expanding his authority over the region of Qayaliq and Almaliq, and getting nearer to Balāsāghūn in the Chu valley.[147] Yet after their defeat at Kashgar the Qara Khitai were not treated as a major threat to the Muslims.[148] Their entrance into the Muslim world was due to an invitation of the Qarakhanid khan of Balāsāghūn, a weak ruler who could not cope alone with his nomad army composed of Qarluq and Qangli tribesmen. The Qarakhanid ruler asked for Dashi's help against them and, according to Juwaynī, "beg[ged] him to advance to his capital so that he might place the whole of his kingdom under his control and so free himself from the cares of this world. The Gürkhan proceed[ed] to Balāsāghūn and ascend[ed] the throne that had cost him nothing."[149] The easy capture of Balāsāghūn is stressed also in other sources.[150] This was a decisive moment in the history of the Qara Khitai, and its importance was proclaimed by changing the reign title to Kangguo ("the country pacified"), in 1134.[151]

The Gürkhan degraded the Qarakhanid ruler of Balāsāghūn to the title of Ilig Türkmen, instead of Ilig Khan. Near or at Balāsāghūn he established his new capital, a tent city known by the Turkic name of Quz Ordo (*Husi woerduo*, "the strong *ordu*" [royal camp]),[152] and from there he started to send his governors to the regions of the Yenisei, the Issyk Kul, Talas and the Ili river, and gradually succeeded in establishing his authority over the Qangli, and probably over the Qarluqs as well.[153] It was also in Balāsāghūn that the 10,000 Khitans formerly subject to Arslan Khan joined him, thereby greatly enlarging his power.[154] Already at this stage the Gürkhan might have established contact with the Qarakhanids' suzerain, the Saljūq Sultan Sanjar. According to Jūzjānī's unique report, when the Qara Khitai had entered Balāsāghūn with Qarakhanid consent (which the Qara Khitai

[146] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83; Juwaynī, 2:86, tr. Boyle, 354; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 236, 419; *SH*, par. 151, 152, 177, 198; *SHdR*, par. 151, 152, 177, 198, commentary, 1:554, 563, 2:640, 699, 1047–8; *LS*, 106/1540; for the etymology see, e.g., WF, 431; K. H. Menges, "Titles and Organizational Terms of the Qytan (Liao) and Qara Qytai (Si Liao) [*sic*]," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 17 (1953), 68–79; PH, 248–51; G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden, 1963–75), 3:633–7; Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:225–6. A tempting solution is to connect the title Gürkhan to the Khitan word for state or empire (*guo*), read Gur by Kara (G. Kara, "On the Khitan Writing System," *Mongolian Studies* 10 [1987], 24) but Kuek or Kuei by Chinggeltei (Chinggeltei [Qinggeertai] et al., *Qidan xiaozi yanjiu* [Beijing, 1985], 91), yet Prof. Kara himself defined this as "his wild idea" (personal communication, June 1996, March 1999).
[147] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:261; Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355.
[148] *Inshā'*, 36–7. [149] Juwaynī, 2: 87–8, tr. Boyle, 355.
[150] Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 50; Muḥammad Bakrān, *Jahān nāmah*, ed. M. A. Riyaḥī (Tehran, 1983), 72; *JS*, 121/2637.
[151] *LS*, 30/357; WF, 621. [152] For the name and location of the city, see pp. 106–7.
[153] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 355–6; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 50.
[154] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. The number is quoted as 16,000 in WF, 634–5 after J. Marquart, "Über das Volkstum der Komanen," in J. Marquart and W. Bang, *Osttürkisch Dialektstudien* (Berlin, 1914), 164–5; whence *XLSG*, 51; JZA 1996, 38–9.

obtained by paying them), they asked Sanjar for pastures. Only after obtaining his permission did they make Balāsāghūn, Qayaliq and Almaliq their pasture lands.[155]

However, before entering further into the Islamic world, Dashi sent an expedition eastward, against the Jin. Dashi appointed Xiao Wolila, the recently nominated grand marshal (*bingma duyuanshuai*) to lead the 70,000 horsemen sent for this mission. He again sacrificed a gray ox and a white horse and addressed his men in an emotional speech recalling the fall of the great Liao and their mission to restore it, and stating that these northern deserts were not a suitable dwelling place for him and for his people. Despite the exhilarating words, the expedition turned out to be a fiasco: "[The army] passed more than 10,000 *li*, did not achieve its aim and turned back. Many of the horses and oxen found their death. The soldiers returned. Dashi said: Heaven does not favor me. This is its will."[156] As noted already by Wittfogel and Feng, the *Liao shi*'s account of this campaign raises many questions: If this was such an important expedition, why did Dashi not lead it himself? If it was indeed such a disaster, why did Xiao Wolila retain his senior position among Qara Khitan generals? How could such a failure, combined with the loss of so many animals, not undermine the Gürkhan's authority and not interrupt the rest of his activities in the next few years during which he established his rule in the Tarim basin, Uighuria and parts of Farghāna? Indeed, the campaign, or at least its failure, must have been much smaller in scale than the *Liao shi* implies. Perhaps, as Wittfogel and Feng suggest, Dashi organized it under the pressure of the homesick Khitans, without any real intention of challenging the Jin, but with the hope that the expected failure would convince his followers to devote their energies to Central Asia.[157]

Indeed, the growth of Dashi's power in 1134 left its mark in the east despite this failure: a Song Chinese detained by the Jin from 1128 reported in a confidential letter to the Song commander of Shaanxi and Sichuan, Zhang Jun, that Dashi's power was increasing daily and asked him to report this information to the Song emperor.[158] Moreover, in spite of the *Liao shi*'s assertion that following the unsuccessful campaign Dashi gave up his ambitions on the Jurchen front, a memorial written by the famous Jin general Nian Han in early 1137 records another conflict between the Western Liao and the Jin, which ended in a modest Qara Khitan victory. Nian Han reported the events of the previous winters (1136 or 1135), in which the troops of the "imperial Linya" attacked the Jin forces. Nian Han was appointed by the emperor to fight them. He met them in the desert, and the two armies fought for three days with no decisive results. In the end the Jurchen army was defeated due to logistical problems: lack of provisions and freezing weather. To make things worse, Nian Han's vice general, a Khitan from the former consort clan (Xiao) defected to his kinsmen with several thousand horsemen, leaving the Jin commanders without troops.[159] Again, some rumors about this expedition

[155] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:261, 2:94. [156] *LS*, 30/357. [157] WF, 624. [158] *JY*, 78/1279.
[159] *SC*, 178/7a ff.; *XLSG*, 53; cf. WF, 636, n. 22; *ZK*, 69; JZA 1996, 44–5; and Liu Pujiang, "Liao chao wangguo zihou de Qidan yimin," *Yanjing Xuebao* 10 (2001), 140 which refutes the anecdote altogether.



might have reached the Song: a Jin letter that fell into Song hands and reported the death of Nian Han in the course of 1137, reported that Dashi still resided "in some corner" and his military power was increasing daily.[160] According to Juwaynī, after taking Balāsāghūn the Gürkhan established his authority over Kashgar, Khotan, the Qyrghyz, and the Uighur center at Besh Baliq.[161] Thus, the second campaign against the Jin might have been a local initiative of his eastern forces. Despite the boost in morale gained by this victory and the gain of several thousand warriors, this attack seems to have been a kind of raid and not a planned campaign or an overall attempt to challenge the Jin.

Despite his great advance eastward, Dashi continued also to advance to the west, towards the fertile valley of Farghāna.[162] These movements brought him into open conflict with the Western Qarakhanids at Khujand in May 1137. The accounts of this battle are extremely terse: Maḥmūd, the Qarakhanid ruler, met the Khitan force at Khujand, on the bank of the Jaxartes. He was badly defeated and turned back to Samarqand, leaving the population of Transoxania frightened and awaiting the next Khitan attack.[163] This, however, did not come immediately. The Gürkhan preferred to strengthen his hold on the lands beyond the Jaxartes, mostly Farghāna and Shāsh. The *Majmūʿal-tawārīkh* mentions a whole list of places, some of them unidentified, but others, like Uzgand, Andijān, Kāsān and Tashkent (i.e., Shāsh), create a reasonable route. The *Majmūʿal-tawārīkh* is also the only source that mentions a violent occupation, blaming the Gürkhan for destroying Uzgand and massacring its people.[164] Yet this information is not in accord with the city's later importance in the Qara Khitai realm; it coincides neither with Ibn al-Athīr's description of the Qara Khitai conquest nor with their attested conduct in Transoxania later on.[165] The Qara Khitai came back to Transoxania only in 1141, when they achieved their greatest victory in the eastern Islamic lands at the battle of Qatwān.

## The battle of Qatwān (Qaṭwān) and its aftermath

Apart from Jūzjānī, who ascribed the battle of Qatwān to the growing numbers of the Qara Khitai, which increased their need for new territories and drove them to an aggressive policy,[166] the other Muslim sources agree that the reappearance

[160] *JY*, 114/1854. [161] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 355.
[162] Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 50; Akhsīkandī, "Majmūʿ al-tawārīkh," fols. 29a–b.
[163] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84–5; "Alfī," fol. 102; Ghaffārī, *Jahān arā*, 161; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 241.
[164] Akhsīkandī, "Majmūʿ al-tawārīkh," fols. 28b–30a. Among the unidentified places are Mīng Chūba; Jadkhūl, which consisted of three great cities: Murghāb (probably not the town and river in eastern Khurāsān); Furghāb/Furtāb and Dungāl, all of which seem to be in or near Farghāna, according to the context.
[165] Uzgand was the capital of the Farghāna Qarakhanids, who were Qara Khitan vassals (O. Pritsak, "Die Karachaniden," *Der Islam* 31 [1953–4], 57). The Gürkhan's treasury was located in this city: Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 64; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84, and see below.
[166] Jūzjānī/Lees, 328; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:261.

of the Qara Khitai in Transoxania in 1141 was at least partly motivated by an invitation from the Muslim lands. The most popular explanation ascribes the initiative for calling them to the Khwārazm Shāh, Atsïz (r. 1127/8–57), who invited the Qara Khitai to conquer the rich and poorly defended lands of his suzerain, Sultan Sanjar.[167] The tension between Sanjar and his Khwārazmian vassal due to the latter's ambitions for independence became apparent in 1138, when Atsïz openly revolted. His army was soon defeated by Sanjar in Hazārasb and the Saljūq Sultan, after executing Atsïz's son (or brother), gave Khwārazm to his own nephew, Sulaymān Shāh. Soon after Sanjar had gone back to Marw, Atsïz, returning from his refuge in Gurgān, rose again and with the support of the Khwārazmians drove Sulaymān Shāh out. In 1139/40 Atsïz attacked Bukhara, defeating its Saljūq governor and ruining the city's citadel. Despite these acts, in early 1141 he chose to submit to Sanjar. Yet it is quite possible that he still sought revenge against Sanjar for the latter's execution of his son (or brother), and therefore contacted the Qara Khitai.[168]

The other element to which the invitation of the Qara Khitai is ascribed, especially in the Saljūq sources, is the Qarluqs. These nomads were at least partially subject to the Qarakhanids, and served as their soldiers. Yet they were often hard to control, as suggested by the Eastern Qarakhanids' call for Dashi's help in Balāsāghūn. This problem was also apparent in the Western Qarakhanid khanate, and in 1130 the Qarakhanid Arslan Khan had already had to summon Sanjar to help him control his nomadic troops.[169] Yet in the case of Qatwān, it seems as if Sanjar was not originally called in to cope with the Qarluqs: Maḥmūd Qarakhan summoned his overlord to avenge the Muslim defeat by the Qara Khitai in Khujand.[170] Sanjar certainly took his time, arriving at Samarqand more than four years after the earlier battle had taken place. This timing was affected by the appeals of the people of Transoxania, who complained about all sorts of oppression and violence, not necessarily connected with the Qarluqs.[171] Sanjar's compliance with this appeal, as well as his coming with a sizable force, was definitely connected to his wish to investigate the rumors about the Qara Khitai intentions towards the Islamic lands, as well as to his desire to tighten his control over this far-away province.[172] After arriving at Samarqand, in July 1141, Sanjar was incited by Maḥmūd or, more probably, by his own commanders to check the growing number

[167] Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī ta'rīkh al-mulūk wa'l-umam* (Beirut, 1992), 18:19; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar* (Cairo, 1907), 3:15–16; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1985), 26:385; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* (Beirut, 1995), 43:216–17; 220; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'ibar* (Beirut, 1957), 5:138; "Alfī," fol. 103; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 266–7. Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 327; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 144–5; C. E. Bosworth, "Sanjar," *EI2* 9 (1995), 147–8; *XLSG*, 59; Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 13–14.

[168] For the relationship between Sanjar and Atsïz, see Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 143–5.

[169] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83; "Alfī," fol. 103. On the Qarluqs see, e.g., Golden, *Introduction*, 196–9.

[170] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85.

[171] Yazdī, *al-'Arāḍa fī al-ḥikāya al-Saljūqiyya* (Leiden, 1909), 97; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 83.

[172] Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 45; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 83; Yazdī, *al-'Arāḍa*, 97; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr* (London, 1921), 172.



of the Qarluqs, banish them, and seize their children.[173] The Qarluqs, despite being badly affected by the presence of the large and undisciplined Saljūq forces in the Samarqand region – or even having been a target of its direct attacks – offered Sanjar their loyalty, backed by a generous donation of animals, but he refused to accept it.[174]

After their generous offer was dismissed, the Qarluqs turned to the Gürkhan, complaining about Sanjar's injustice, and urging him to attack the foolish and drunken Sultan, whose army resented him.[175] The Gürkhan agreed to be their defender, and sent a letter to Sanjar, asking him to forgive the Qarluqs. Sanjar wrote back an arrogant answer. Declining the Gürkhan's suggestion, he called on him to adopt Islam and threatened him with the might of his troops, their weapons and their competence. The Gürkhan was not impressed by Sanjar's boasting. After all, he had his informants (Qarluqs or Khwārazmians) providing him with data about Sanjar's real strength. Ibn al-Athīr even relates that the Gürkhan, upon hearing from Sanjar's messenger that the Saljūq soldiers could cut a single hair into two with their arrows, shaved the messenger's beard and giving him a hair and a needle asked him to cut the hair into two. When the messenger failed to do so, the Gürkhan asked: "If you could not cut one hair with a needle, how can you do it with an arrow?"[176]

The battle took place on September 9, 1141 in the steppe of Qatwān, near Samarqand. While many Muslim sources stress the enormous number of the Gürkhan's troops, comparing them to ants and sand, and the suggested numbers usually make a ratio of 1:3 (100,000:300,000)[177] or even 1:10 (70,000:700,000) to the advantage of the Gürkhan,[178] others describe the battle as being fought by equal forces.[179] The lowest numbers are given by the *Liao shi*, which states that Dashi's left and right flanks each held 2,500 men, a number that implies a central force of 10,000–20,000 men. The organization of the army might of course have been unconventional (i.e., with an especially large center), and the numbers might have been reduced to magnify the victory, just as the Muslims might have increased them to explain their defeat.[180] Sanjar's troops included the forces of most of his vassals, the princes of Khurāsān, Ghazna, Ghūr, Sijistān, Māzandarān, Nīmrūz and even Iraqi contingents. The Qara Khitan army was composed of Khitans, Turks,

[173] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84–5; al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh dawlat Āl Saljūq* (Cairo, 1900), 253; Bundārī, *Zubdat al-nuṣra wa-nukhbat al-'uṣra*, in M. T. Houtsma (ed.), *Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire des Seljoucides* (Leiden, 1886), 1:277–8; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93.

[174] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 84–5; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 172–3; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar* (Cairo, 1961), 6:534; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh-i rawḍat al-ṣafā* (Tehran, 1960), 4:312.

[175] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:312–3; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93.

[176] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85.

[177] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81, 85; Dhahabī, *al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar* (Kuwait, 1963), 4:98; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 43:241; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Damascus, 1993), 6:183; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 267.

[178] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rikh*, 253.

[179] Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:15–16; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl ta'rīkh Dimashq* (Leiden, 1908), 275.

[180] *LS*, 30/356; WF, 648. See p. 151.

Mongols and perhaps also Chinese, to all of whom the Qarluqs gave a valuable reinforcement of 30,000 or 50,000 horsemen.[181]

Both armies divided their troops into three contingents. The Gürkhan himself headed his center. The three Khitan divisions attacked simultaneously, encircled the Muslim army, forced it into a wadi called Dargham, about 12 km from Samarqand, and blocked its way out.[182] The overconfident Saljūq army was badly defeated, and Sultan Sanjar barely escaped to Tirmidh.[183] His wife and some of his famous warriors were taken captive. The number of the dead was huge and is estimated to have been between 11,000 and 100,000 men; the *Liao shi* describes the bodies that covered several hundred *li* of earth. Muslim sources mention that among the numerous victims were military commanders, religious and civil dignitaries, as well as women.[184]

Apart from the immediate gain of riches, animals, prisoners, and great prestige, the battle of Qatwān brought Transoxania into the Qara Khitan realm.[185] The Gürkhan stayed in Samarqand for ninety days, during which he obtained the submission of the Muslim rulers and appointed his governors of Samarqand and Bukhara. Maḥmūd Qarakhan escaped, but the Gürkhan enthroned his brother, Ibrāhīm son of Muḥammad, as the new ruler of Samarqand and even married his daughter.[186] In Bukhara, the Gürkhan left the ruling religious leaders, the *ṣadr* family of the Burhāns, intact, but added his own governor, who was ordered to work in close cooperation with the local Muslim leadership.[187]

Another consequence of the battle of Qatwān for the Qara Khitai was that Khwārazm became their vassal. Despite their early possible alliance, the Gürkhan might have been annoyed by Atsïz's independent plans, demonstrated by his attacks on Khurāsān (see below) or perhaps he simply wanted to secure the profits from the rich commercial province of Khwārazm. Probably in 1142, he sent his commander-in-chief, Erbuz, to Khwārazm. The latter plundered the province and wrought great havoc, thereby causing Atsïz to agree to pay an annual tribute of 30,000 dinars.[188] According to Jūzjānī, after their great victory the Qara Khitai asked for an *amān* (a pledge of security by virtue of which an infidel is entitled to protection while he

[181] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85–6; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 85; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 172; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 110; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 45; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 43:240; Fasīḥ, *Mujmal-i Fāsiḥī* (Tus-Mashed, 1960), 2:235. See p. 147.

[182] *LS*, 30/356; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 44; al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-ansāb* (Beirut, 1988), 2:470; al-Nasafī, *Qandiyya dar bayān-i mazārāt-i Samarqand* (Tehran, 1955), 24, 41.

[183] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85.

[184] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 88; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 173; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 110; "Alfī," fol. 102; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 43:210–12, 220, 421; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 6:183; Aḥmad Rāzī, *Haft Iqlīm*, in C. Schefer (ed.), *Description de Boukhara par Nerchakhy* (Paris, 1892), 246; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Beirut, 1955–8), 1:354, 4:375; *LS*, 30/356.

[185] Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 174; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 46. See also ch. 2.

[186] Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 87.

[187] Niẓamī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22. On the *ṣadr* institution and the Burhān family see, e.g., O. Pritsak, "Āl-i Burhān," *Der Islam* 30 (1950), 81–96; see also pp. 124, 180, and 183–4.

[188] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356.



is in Muslim territories) from Sanjar.[189] This certainly seems strange considering the battle's result, but some sort of agreement was probably reached, since a year after the battle the Qara Khitai sent back some of the important captives including Sanjar's wife and *amīr* Qumāch in return for a generous ransom.[190]

However, there is no confirmation of Jūzjānī's assertion that most of the Khurāsāni rulers paid tribute to the Khitans or that the latter indeed invaded the territories beyond the Oxus and moved deep into Khurāsān at this stage.[191]

All in all, the Qara Khitan conquest of Transoxania seems to have been rather swift, compared with the six months required for Sanjar to take Samarqand in 1130,[192] and far less bloody than the Oghuz's invasions of Khurāsān in the 1150s.[193]

Sanjar's defeat at Qatwān, the first he ever experienced, severely harmed his position, as the famous verse of Farīd al-Kātib, so widely quoted in connection to this battle, clearly reflects:

> O king, your spear has set the whole world straight;
> Your foes for forty years your sword did sate:
> If now ill luck befalls, Fate will it so,
> For God alone remains in one state![194]

The resultant blow to Sanjar's power and prestige was quickly exploited by his vassal Atsïz. Soon after the battle he invaded Marw, Nīshāpūr and other cities of Khurāsān.[195] Sanjar regained his position in Khurāsān in the next year (1142/3), but this recovery was only temporary.[196]

The most renowned outcome of the battle of Qatwān, however, had nothing to do with the historical combat. Rumors about the great Muslim defeat by their non-Muslim enemy reached the Crusaders in Palestine and gave a boost to the legend of Prester John, the Christian priest-king who was supposed to have hastened to the aid of his coreligionists in the Holy Land from his remote kingdom in Asia. Whether John was in fact a blurred version of the title Gürkhan is uncertain, but there is no doubt that the fame of this legend is much more widespread than that of the Qara Khitai themselves.[197]

[189] Jūzjānī/Lees, 328. For the *amān* and its importance see, e.g., M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, 1955), 162–6.

[190] Jūzjānī/Lees, 328; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 174.

[191] Jūzjānī/Lees, 328.

[192] For Sanjar's attack on Samarqand, see Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 140.

[193] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:95. For the Oghuz's attacks, see ch. 2 below.

[194] Translated in E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (London, 1906), 2:345 (who wrongly ascribed it to Sanjar's defeat by the Oghuz). The verse appears, e.g., in Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 46; Mirkhwānd, *Ta'rikh*, 4:313; Yazdī, *al-'Arāḍa*, 99; Rāḥwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 173.

[195] For Atsïz's invasion of Khurāsān see e.g. Juwaynī, 2:5–8, tr. Boyle, 280–2; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 327; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 145.

[196] See ch. 2 below.

[197] For the legend of Prester John see, e.g., C. F. Beckingham and B. Hamilton (eds.), *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes* (London, 1996); J. Pirenne, *La legende du "Prêtre Jean"* (Strasbourg, 1993); A. Klopprogge, *Ursprung und Ausprägung des abendländischen Mongolen bildes im 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1993); L. N. Gumilev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom: The Legend of the Kingdom of Prester John* (Cambridge, 1987); I. de Rachewiltz, *Prester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia* (Canberra, 1972); P. Jackson, "Prester John Redivivus: A Review Article," *JRAS*, 3, 7 (1997), 424–32.

Dashi did not have long to enjoy his victory. He died in 1143, thereby opening the most obscure period in Qara Khitan history.

The Qara Khitai empire as created by Dashi encompassed in 1143 at least the regions of Transoxania, Farghāna, Semirechye, the Tarim basin and Uighuria. This vast territory was roughly equivalent to most of modern Xinjiang, Qyrghyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and south Qazaqstan; until 1175 it also included parts of western Mongolia. The empire was divided into the central territory, under the direct rule of the Qara Khitai, whose center was at or near Balāsāghūn in the Chu valley;[198] the subject kingdoms of the Gaochang Uighurs, the Eastern and Western Qarakhanids, and Khwārazm, more of an "outer vassal" than the other states; as well as the subject tribes such as the Qarluqs and till 1175 the Naiman and the Qangli. It is not easy to define the borders of the Qara Khitai empire. The western border is generally considered to be the Oxus river, but Qara Khitai forces were active in Khurāsān in the 1160s–1180s, and Balkh at least remained under their rule from 1165 to 1198. The southern border probably passed through Balkh, Khotan and Hami. The northern border reached up to the realm of the Yenisei Qyrghyz and the Qangli eastern territories in the upper Irtish, north of Lake Balqash till 1175, afterwards retreating to the region of Lake Balqash.[199] The eastern border is even harder to specify: Uighuria was certainly included in the Qara Khitai realm, and at least till 1175 the Western Liao enjoyed a certain sovereignty over the Naiman, i.e., east of the Altai, and perhaps even going all the way into the region of the future Qara Qorum, not far from Kedun.[200] This sort of sovereignty might have been exercised over other Mongol tribes or territories. In 1156, for example, we hear about Qara Khitai at Kedun, and their ability to reach that far suggests at least the existence of friendly relations with the Mongol tribes.[201] Yet even without the Mongol territories, Dashi had managed to create an empire no smaller than the contemporary states of the Jin and Song.[202]

In trying to explain Dashi's rise, one must take into account the fluid situation of the nomads in twelfth-century Central Asia. Several indicators, such as the rulers' attempts to limit the numbers and proliferation of nomads, or the competition over pasture lands between nomads and sedentaries, attest to the growing number of nomads in this period. This situation must have left many nomads ready to join a new and promising leader such as Yelü Dashi, either as whole tribes or as individuals. The growing number of the nomads and the instability among them

[198] For a detailed discussion of the borders of the central territory see pp. 104–6.
[199] *JS*, 121/2637.
[200] *JS*, 121/2637; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jami'u't-tawarikh Compendium of Chronicles* tr. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 1:68. There is no proof that in the twelfth century the Naiman indeed reached the region of Qara Qorum.
[201] *DJGZ*, 14/107, and see ch. 2; cf. *XLSG*, 62.
[202] On Qara Khitai territories see WF², 657–9; Ding Qian, "Xi Liao li guo benmo kao," 3b; Deng Ruiling, "Xi Liao jiangyu qianshi," *Minzu Yanjiu*, 1980/2, 31–8; *XLSYJ*, 114–30; *XLSG*, 62–5.



also contributed to the weakness of local rulers, as exemplified by the Qarakhanid case. It therefore paved the way for the rapid rise of new forces.[203]

Apart from these important contributing factors, Dashi had on his side the loyalty of his early followers, and the relatively rich supply of horses, originally belonging to his troops. Moreover, as legitimizing factors, he enjoyed the double prestige of China as a cultural entity and of the Liao as a nomadic political power, respected by Mongol and Turkic tribes alike.[204] This duality is implied by the double titles of both Chinese emperor and Gürkhan. Moreover, Dashi enjoyed the reputation, whether justified or not, of having defeated the awe-inspiring Jurchens, and from his coronation onward he had a series of military successes, interrupted only by the failure of the campaign against the Jin. Together with his strong personality, these features turned Dashi into a desirable leader, and his final victory in Qatwān certainly strengthened this status. His tendency to retain local rulers in their posts also facilitated the smooth stabilization of the new empire.

Another question that must be dealt with here is whether after their achievements in Transoxania and Khwārazm the Qara Khitai were still interested in restoring the Liao in its former domains. Although this probably remained the elite's dream, practical problems such as the need to cross over Mongolia or pass through the Xi Xia realm before attacking the Jin and the undiminished force of the Jurchens, together with the fact that the Qara Khitai now controlled a vast empire of their own in Central Asia, not dissimilar to the Liao's original territories, all stood against the realization of the "old Liao" vision. It is also doubtful whether Dashi could have found support among his non-Khitan subjects for such a long, complicated and unpromising campaign as one against the Jurchens would have been.

Despite the partial fading of the "old Liao" vision, the Qara Khitai certainly retained both their ethnic Khitan identity, as proved by later "eastern" Khitans' attempts to join them (see chapter 2 below), and the unique Chinese aspects of their rule, displayed, for instance, in the use of Chinese titles and coins. The persistence of this double character had an important role in Qara Khitai legitimacy, not only for their Khitan (and Chinese) followers, but also for the rest of their subjects, due to the prestige China and the Khitans still held among twelfth-century Inner Asian Mongol, Turkic and Iranian populations.[205] This unique legitimacy enabled the Qara Khitai to remain quite aloof from the mostly Muslim population of their kingdom, even after they were firmly attached to Muslim Central Asia from 1141 onward.

[203] E.g. Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83; Gumilev, *Searches*, 119–20. For further discussion and examples see pp. 139–43.
[204] For Liao relations with the Mongols see Zhou Liangxiao et al., *Yuan dai shi* (Shanghai, 1993), 18–28; K. Perlee, "Sobstvenno Mongol'skie plemena v period Kidan'skoj imperii (907–1125gg)," in *Trudy XXV mezhdunarodnogo kongressa vostokovedov* (Moscow, 1963), 314–16; E. I. Kychavov, "Mongoly v VI – pervoj polovine XIIv.," in *Dal'nij Vostok i sosedenie territorii v srednie veka* (Novosibirsk, 1980), 136–48.
[205] For China and the Liao position in Central Asia before the Qara Khitai, see pp. 96–100.

CHAPTER 2

# The quiet period – the reign of Yelü Yilie and the empresses

The middle period of Qara Khitai history (1144–77) is certainly the least documented one, and the information we have is not only meager but also extremely sketchy. During this period the Qara Khitai were ruled by Dashi's widow, Xiao Tabuyan (r. 1143–50); by his son, Yelü Yilie (r. 1151–63); and by his daughter, Yelü Pusuwan (r. 1164–77).[1]

Despite the scanty information one can identify several major trends in this period. The first and most prominent one is the growing conflict between nomads and the state, demonstrated by the troubles with the Oghuz (Ghuzz), the Qarluqs and the northern tribes. The second is the Qara Khitai's struggle with their new vassal state of Khwārazm, which was trying to assert its independence. The third, certainly influenced by the Qara Khitai's growing involvement in the events on their western border, is the weakening, towards the end of the period, of Qara Khitai rule in their northeastern territories such as the Irtish region.

Dashi was succeeded by his wife, Xiao Tabuyan, who was also his paternal cousin. Tabuyan, known as Orghina or Kuyang in the Muslim sources,[2] used the honorific titles of empress Gantian, Gürkhan and Dashi, the last two being retained by her successors as well.[3] She reigned for seven years under the reign title Xianqing ("completely virtuous"). The *Liao shi* explains that the empress was merely a regent, who ruled because at Yelü Dashi's demise his sons were still minors, a fact that might be confirmed by Rashīd al-Dīn's record that the

[1] *LS*, 30/357–8; the dates, based on the *Liao shi* and Ibn al-Athīr, are calculated according to WF, 621. See also *BSJ*, 5692 (translated in Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:28). Muslim authors transmit several garbled versions of the dynastic history of the Qara Khitai, nearly all of them acknowledging the important role of women: Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; Dhahabī, *Ibar*, 4:103; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 44:449; Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī biʾl-wāfayāt* (Beirut, 1993), 24:375; "Alfī," fol. 18b.; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, 5:227; Jūzjānī/Lees, 329; Juwaynī, 2:88–9, tr. Boyle, 356–7; Ghaffārī, *Jahān arā*, 166; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 234; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 46; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 174; Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, 255; Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah, 1:236.

[2] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 234; "Alfī," fol. 18b; Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356, where Boyle suggested that Kuyang is identical to the Mongol title *guyang* from the Chinese *Guowang* ("prince de royaume"), though this is a rather degrading title for an empress. Kuyang might also be a transliteration of Chinese *Gugong*, "imperial princess." The Kuwābik mentioned in Ghaffārī, *Jahān arā*, 166 is probably a blurred version of Juwaynī's Kuyang (KWYNK < KWABK).

[3] *LS*, 30/357; *JS*, 121/2638; Ghaffārī, *Jahān arā*, 166.





Gürkhan's son was only eight or nine years old when his father died.[4] However, Muslim sources suggest that the empress held unlimited authority in her realm, as is also implied by her titles.[5]

Dashi's death was certainly felt in Central Asia: the Oghuz, who after the battle of Qatwān were mostly driven out of Transoxania, used this opportunity to return to Bukhara. In March 1144 they invaded the city and wreaked great havoc, killing some of the city's notables and destroying its citadel only two years after the Gürkhan's representative had restored it.[6] There is no record of Qara Khitai reaction to this offense, but since in 1152 the Oghuz were again located in Khuttalān and Balkh (i.e. in Khurāsān), they must have been driven away from Bukhara before that time. This probably took place after 1148, when a coin from Bukhara bearing the name of its Qarakhanid ruler, Ibrāhīm, and the Oghuz's overlord, Sultan Sanjar, was minted.[7]

Sanjar was another who had tried to benefit from Dashi's death. In 1143 the Saljūq Sultan fought against Atsïz Khwārazm Shāh, restored Saljūq control in Khurāsān and besieged Khwārazm, thereby causing Atsïz to become his vassal again.[8] Despite his renewed surrender to Sanjar, however, Atsïz continued to pay tribute to the Qara Khitai until his death.[9] Indeed, Ibn al-Athīr indicates that Sanjar refrained from killing Atsïz only because of his fear of the Qara Khitai's reaction to such an act.[10] Moreover, apart from resuming his authority in Khwārazm and Khurāsān, Sanjar might for a while have maintained a certain authority in Transoxania as well, as implied by the 1148 Bukhari coin mentioned above and by Ḥusaynī's declarations that Saljūq authority in Transoxania ceased to exist only after Sanjar's death.[11]

Dashi's demise was felt also in the eastern part of the Qara Khitai realm. In late 1144 the Uighurs offered tribute to the Jin, reported on Dashi's death, and noted that his people were their neighbors. The Jin emperor sent a messenger with the Uighurs, a man named Niange Hannu, to the Qara Khitai.[12] After consolidating its position in East Asia by signing a treaty with the Song in 1141, the Jin dynasty had made an effort to secure its western border, mostly through a policy of divide and

[4] *LS*, 30/357; Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah, 1:236. Yet when Dashi fled from the Jin in 1123, he took his five sons with him (*SMJW* 1/7a, and see also *BSJ*, 5692; *XLSG*, 77 n. 1). If one of those sons survived the western expedition, he was certainly an adult in 1143, though probably only the descendants of Xiao Tabuyan were eligible to rule.

[5] See, e.g., Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrīkh*, 4:368 who calls her Khan and Farmā-i Farmānī ("the edict-giver," i.e. the sovereign); Juwaynī, 2:88–9, tr. Boyle, 356. See pp. 160–2.

[6] Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh-i Bukhārā* (Paris, 1892), 23; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 327.

[7] B. D. Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety: istochnikovedcheskoe i istoricheskoe issledovanie* (Moscow, 1993), 31; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 46 and see below.

[8] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:95–6; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 43:224; Dhahabī, *Ibar*, 4:103; Juwaynī, 2:7–8, tr. Boyle, 281–2.

[9] Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," MS BM Or. 4898, fol. 243a. [10] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:95.

[11] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 123, 195.

[12] *JS*, 121/2637. The Uighurs had been vassals of the Khitans since the mid-1130s (see pp. 37, 41). Yet by autumn 1138 the *Jin shi* records that their representatives came to the Jurchen court to offer tribute (*JS*, 4/73; *ZK*, 87). On the Uighurs' relations with Liao and Jin, see, e.g., Cheng Suluo, "Lun Liao Jin yu Huihu de guanxi," *Liao Jin shi lunji* 3 (1987): 79–89.

rule towards the tribes in Mongolia, promoting conflicts among its main protégé, the Tatar tribe, and its neighbors, especially the Kereyids and the Mongols. Unable to subdue the Mongols by force, in 1146/7 the Jin initiated a peace agreement with them, according to which, in return for generous deliveries of food and silk, the forefathers of Chinggis Khan acknowledged themselves as Jin vassals.[13] As part of the stabilization of its western border, the Jin was ready to make peace with the Qara Khitai, as long as they, like the Chinese and the Mongols, would recognize their superiority. However, the Qara Khitai sense of honor was at least as strong as the Jurchens', a fact that hindered the agreement.

When the Jin messenger met the new Gürkhan in 1146,[14] the empress was hunting. Against the usual custom, he refused to dismount in her presence. The alarmed empress asked for an explanation. Niange Hannu proudly replied that he was an emissary of the Son of Heaven, coming from a superior court, and it was therefore the Gürkhan who should dismount and hear the commands of the Jurchen emperor. Gantian was not ready to allow such conduct in her realm. The messenger was forced to dismount and kowtow. When he subsequently turned to threats, furiously claiming that the Jurchens would not allow the Gürkhan to enlarge her army, and were ready to send troops against the Qara Khitai, the empress simply executed him.[15] Niange Hannu's fate became known to the Jin by deserters from the Western Liao only in 1175,[16] a fact that manifests the unrealistic character of his threats. Still, the incident implies that unlike the Song, the Xi Xia and the Mongols, the Qara Khitai were not ready to recognize Jin superiority, nor were they afraid of challenging it.

The next event about which we are informed is the beginning of Yilie's rule, in 1151. The sources provide no information as to whether this was due to Yilie's coming of age or to the empress's demise. He reigned for thirteen years, using the reign title Shaoxing ("continuous flourishing"), died in 1163, and was known as Emperor Renzong. His sole action to be recorded in the *Liao shi* was the census of people over eighteen years old he had conducted, which found that there were 84,500 households in all.[17] This relatively small number is somewhat embarrassing: since the population of pre-Mongol Samarqand alone was estimated by Chang Chun as comprising 100,000 households,[18] the census could not have encompassed the whole population under the Gürkhan's rule. It was probably limited to the central territory of the Qara Khitai, centered in the region of Balāsāghūn, yet it is impossible to know whether it included only the nomadic population or, more probably, the sedentary population as well.[19]

[13] *DJGZ*, 12/99–100; *JY*, 19/591; J. Tamura, "The Legend of the Origins of the Mongols and Problems concerning their Migration," *Acta Asiatica* 24 (1973):10–12; Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 238–9; T. T. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *CHC6*, 323–4; Cen Jiawu, "Jin dai Nuzhen he Hanzu ji qi ta minzu de jingji wenhua guanxi", *Liao Jin shi lun wen ji* (Liaoning, 1985), 389–412; P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, tr. T. N. Haining (Oxford, 1991), 9–10; Zhou Liangxiao et al., *Yuan dai shi*, 43–4.

[14] *JS*, 4/82. [15] *JS*, 121/2638. [16] *Ibid.*, also 7/165. [17] *LS*, 30/357.

[18] WF, 659; *Chang Chun*, 1/32b.

[19] WF, 643, 659, 668; for Liao censuses, including those of the *ordu*, see WF, 31, 44, 52–4, 112–14, 385, 512. See pp. 152–3.



Just like Empress Gantian's rise to power, Yilie's accession took place in a turbulent period in Khurāsān, dominated by the Oghuz rebellion against Sanjar. The Qara Khitai were at least partly responsible for the Oghuz dislocation from Transoxania to Balkh[20] and, indirectly, also for their growing tax-burden due to Sanjar's heavy expenses at Qatwān, yet the incentive for the Oghuz rebellion was the behavior of Sanjar's governor of Balkh, *amīr* Qumāch. In 1152 Qumāch enlisted Oghuz support against the Ghūrids, a rising dynasty from the region of modern Afghanistan, that challenged Saljūq rule in Balkh. The Oghuz, however, chose to defect to the Ghūrid side, enabling them temporarily to conquer the city. When Qumāch retook it shortly afterwards, he expanded his financial demands from the Oghuz, thereby increasing their discontent. In 1153 when a Saljūq tax-collector came to levy the Oghuz's annual tribute, 24,000 sheep for Sanjar's kitchen, he acted so brutally that the Oghuz killed him. Qumāch took this opportunity to attack and repel them, ignoring their offers of recompense for the murder. In the armed conflict that followed, however, both he and his sons lost their lives. The annoyed Sanjar took the field himself in 1153, again only after declining the Oghuz's generous offers of an extended annual tribute accompanied by slaves, animals and money. The Oghuz then turned against the Saljūq forces, defeated them twice and even captured Sanjar and his commanders.

Reduced to a puppet ruler in an iron cage, Sanjar watched the Oghuz plunder Khurāsān, while his kingdom was torn apart between his vassals and commanders. Sanjar's successors, the feeble Sulaymān Shāh and the Qarakhanid Maḥmūd, the former Khan of Samarqand, could not face the Oghuz alone, and the coalition Maḥmūd tried to form with the Khwārazm Shāh Atsïz did not materialize in time. In 1156 Sanjar took advantage of the Oghuz's internal quarrels and escaped from captivity, but it was far too late for the aged Sultan to restore his former authority. His death in 1157 put an end to Saljūq dominion in Khurāsān, and left the province the object of prolonged struggles, first among the Oghuz and Sanjar's commanders and later between the Khwārazm Shāhs and the Ghūrids.[21]

We have no evidence of Qara Khitan involvement in all these Khurāsāni conflicts, and the only source that relates a Qara Khitai reaction to the aforementioned is Jūzjānī, who claims that the Qara Khitai were very much strengthened by Sanjar's war with the Oghuz and his subsequent fall, which enabled them to enforce their rule over all the "kings of Turkestan" (*muluk-i Turkistān*). Those kings kept on sending the Khitans precious gifts in order to gain their support in

[20] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:176; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3: 25–6.

[21] For Sanjar's conflict with the Oghuz and its aftermath see, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:176–82; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 48–52; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 257–60; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 177–84; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 123–6; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:128; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 45:41; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:26–27; Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:148; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 325; Yazdī, *al-'Arāḍa*, 101–9; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:315–20; "Alfī," fols. 44b–49b; Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ, *Nāmahhā-i Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ* (Tehran, 1959), 19–32; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 151–7; Agadzhanov, *Sel'dzhukidov*, 194–217. For the Ghūrids see A. K. Nizami, "The Ghurids," in *HCCA4*, 177–90.

their imminent mutual struggles, about which, however, we have no information.[22] Nevertheless, Ḥusaynī's assertion that Sanjar's death put an end to the Saljūq state in Transoxania[23] implies that the Qara Khitai used the turbulent years in Khurāsān to reconsolidate their hold on this important province. In this context it might be significant that the only coins unearthed so far that bear the title Gürkhan after the title of the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand, Ibrāhīm, are dated to 547/1153–4 and 548/1154–5.[24]

The minimal involvement of the Qara Khitai in Khurāsāni affairs might be explained by their activity in the eastern part of their realm in the mid-1150s. In the winter of 1156 the Jin commander Po Longdun, who was ordered by the emperor to establish *tuntian* (military-agricultural colonies) at Hedong (probably identical to Kedun), met with "several hundred wandering raiders of Linya's son, Wulu" (i.e. Yilie) who emerged in front of the army. Po Longdun sent a messenger to negotiate with them and they subsequently withdrew.[25] It is hard to determine whether this was a simple raid or a preliminary stage in an organized imperial effort, perhaps implied by the recent census, to attack the Jin, or at least to check the possibility of such an attack. Despite the fact that it came to naught (and this could easily be explained by the western affairs discussed below), the Western Liao still retained a certain appeal for their fellow Khitans under Jurchen rule. This was manifested in the "eastern" Khitan rebellion of 1161, provoked by the Jin internal policy. Saba, one of the rebel leaders, planned to find refuge with the Qara Khitai. He started westward, crossing the Kerulen river, but before reaching his destination was captured and killed by another Khitan leader, Yelü Wowo. The latter preferred to enthrone himself as a new Khitan emperor, a title he held till his execution by the Jurchens in 1163.[26]

Looking westward again, however, the Qara Khitai retreat in 1156 can easily be explained by the developments of this year in the west: Sanjar's escape from the Oghuz, Atsïz's death and the rise of his ambitious son Il Arslan to the throne of Khwārazm, and the Qarluq rebellion in Transoxania.

Sanjar's escape put an end to Atsïz's ambition to take the former's place as the ruler of Iran. Atsïz died shortly afterwards and his son and heir, Il Arslan (r. 1156–72), gained Sanjar's approval of his accession by declaring himself a Saljūq vassal.[27] Following his father, Il Arslan also retained his vassalage to the

[22] Jūzjānī/Lees, 311. The only information in the sources about problems in Turkestan in this period refers to the Jand incident in 1152 (i.e., a bit too early to be related to Sanjar's captivity), which resulted in Atsïz's victory over the city's Qarakhanid governor, Kamāl al-Dīn (Juwaynī, 2:11–12, tr. Boyle, 284–5; Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 22). Although both sides were Qara Khitai vassals, there is no reference to Khitan involvement.

[23] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 126, 195. [24] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31.

[25] *DJGZ*, 14/107; cf. *ZK*, 88 where Pikov interprets this passage as an attempt of the Western Liao to initiate normalization with the Jin, and Liu Pujiang, "Qidan yimin," 140–1, who refutes the historicity of the incident altogether.

[26] For the Khitan rebellions see *JS*, 132/2825, 133/2849–51; *JCS*, 266–73, 351–3; Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 241, 243–4; Jagchid, "Khitan Struggle," 38–43; Chen Shu, "Da Liao wajie yihou de Qidan ren," *Liao Jin shi lunji* 1 (1987), 302–4; Cen Jiawu, "Jin dai Nuzhen," 405–7; Liu Pujiang, "Qidan yimin," 152–5.

[27] "Alfī," fol. 59a; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, 5:194.



Qara Khitai, to whom he annually gave tribute.[28] Yet Il Arslan had his own ambitions. When Sanjar died, Il Arslan treated his successor in the west, Mas'ūd, as an equal, not as a lord, and when the latter offered to launch a joint attack against "the infidels of Transoxania," apparently the Qara Khitai, Il Arslan willingly agreed. The alliance did not materialize after all, partly because of Mas'ūd's strained relations with the Caliph and despite Il Arslan's efforts to appease the two.[29] Yet, in a few years Il Arslan found his chance to interfere in Transoxanian affairs as the champion of the Qarluq cause.

The Qarluq's conflict with the Qarakhanids gave the pretext for the Qara Khitai's interference in Transoxania in 1141, yet it did not come to an end after both sides became Qara Khitai subjects. In early 1156, the Qarluqs killed Ibrāhīm Tamghaj Khan son of Muḥammad, the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand, in Kallābād near Bukhara, and threw his body into the steppe.[30] Ibrāhīm was succeeded for a year (552/1157–8) by his son Maḥmūd, and then by Ibrāhīm's brother, 'Alī b. Ḥasan (r. 552–6/1157–61), known as Chaghrï Khan.[31] The new ruler wanted to avenge his brother's blood, and soon after his accession killed one of the Qarluq leaders, planning to repay the others as well. In early 1158 some of the Qarluq leaders fled to Khwārazm, and pleaded for Il Arslan's help.[32] Despite the friendly letters he had recently exchanged with the Khan of Samarqand, in July 1158 the Khwārazm Shāh set out for Transoxania, apparently to fight for the Qarluq cause. He entered Bukhara, encouraging its people with promises and nominating his governors over them, and then surrounded Samarqand. Chaghrï Khan took refuge in the citadel and called both the Türkmens of the lower Jaxartes and his sovereigns the Qara Khitai for help. The Qara Khitai sent Ilig Türkmen, probably the Eastern Qarakhanid ruler of that time, to his aid with 10,000 riders. The two forces were deployed on the opposite banks of the Zarafshān river near Samarqand. Seeing the huge number of the Khwārazmian troops, Ilig Türkmen refrained from fighting and urged the religious dignitaries of Samarqand to make peace. With their mediation a truce was achieved: the Qarluqs were installed in their former posts "with full honors" and Il Arslan returned to Khwārazm.[33] In the sources this truce seems to be a result of the local initiative of Ilig Türkmen, yet, as Bosworth suggested, it might also reflect the direction of the Qara Khitai, who were not interested in taking sides in a war waged between their two vassals.[34] Nonetheless, both Il Arslan and the Qarluqs continued to bother the Qara Khitai long after this truce was declared.

Chaghrï Khan's successor, another brother of Ibrāhīm called Mas'ūd son of Ḥasan (1161–70/1) was also determined to avenge his brother's blood. Upon his

[28] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:300.

[29] *Inshā'*, in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 30–3; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 332.

[30] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:202 (who gave the date of Dhū al-Ḥijja 550/January–February 1156); Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-surah*, in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 132 (who dated it to 551/February 1156–February 1157); Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 241 (where Chaghrï Khan's accession is dated to 550/1155–6); Barthold, *Turkestan*, 333; Pritsak, "Karachaniden," 53.

[31] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31. [32] Juwaynī, 2:14–15, tr. Boyle, 288.

[33] *Ibid.*; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:364; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 243b; "Alfī," fol. 63a; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 333–4.

[34] Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 187.

accession, however, he already had to face another Qarluq rebellion, led by the commander of the Qarakhanid troops in Transoxania, ʿAyyār Beg. For a short time the rebel took Samarqand, and when the Khan met him between Zamīn and Sābāṭ, north of the city, ʿAyyār Beg almost managed to kill him before being captured and executed in late 1161.[35] The troops of Ilig Türkmen might have been also involved in the quelling of this rebellion, as Ḥusaynī ascribed the killing of ʿAyyār Beg to the people of Khotan (*ḥasham Khutan*).[36]

It was probably against the background of these ongoing Qarluq rebellions that by late 1163 or early 1164 the Qara Khitai ordered the Western Qarakhanids to drive the Qarluqs from the environs of Bukhara and Samarqand to Kashgar, where they were supposed to engage in agriculture and refrain from taking up arms. When the Qarakhanid ruler informed the Qarluqs of the Qara Khitai's demand, the Qarluqs refused to leave. Planning to take over Transoxania just like the Oghuz had taken Khurāsān, they entered Bukhara. The local *ṣadr* (religious-administrative leader) informed the Khan of Samarqand of their appearance and delayed them, apparently negotiating the price for which they would refrain from plundering the city. The negotiation dragged on until the troops of Samarqand appeared and drove the Qarluqs away from Bukhara and its environs. It was probably on this occasion that Masʿūd took revenge on his brother's murderers, purging the Qarluqs from the whole of Transoxania,[37] apparently without the help of the Qara Khitai. There is no mention of a further conflict between the Qarluqs and the Qarakhanids and, after restoring the walls of Bukhara in 1164/5, Masʿūd could cross the Oxus and turn his attention to the Oghuz in Khurāsān.[38]

The (unimplemented) expulsion of the Qarluqs was probably one of the first decisions of the new Gürkhan: Yilie died abruptly in 1163 and was succeeded by his sister, Yelü Pusuwan, known as empress Chengtian (r. 1164–77), who ruled under the reign title Chongfu ("exalted happiness"). Her succession is ascribed to Yilie's explicit will, based on the fact that by the time of his death his sons were still minors.[39] Yet while both lateral succession and female regency were not uncommon among the Khitans,[40] lateral succession by a sister was certainly an exception. This particular instance can be explained by a correlation of the generally high position of women among the Khitans and the Qara Khitai and the unique position of Pusuwan's father-in-law. This was Xiao Wolila, a renowned general, who in 1131/2 had received from Dashi a posthumous honorary title for

[35] al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "Aʿrāḍ al-siyāsa fī aghrāḍ al-riʾāsa," MS Leiden Cod. 904, fols. 213b–214a, reproduced in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 71–2; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 334; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 148; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād nāmah* (Istanbul, 1948), 16 for the date.

[36] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 148.

[37] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310–11; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "Aʿrāḍ," fols. 213b–214a; "Alfī," fol. 80b; cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 333.

[38] Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh*, 23, 25; Narshakhī, *History of Bukhara* (Cambridge, MA, 1954), 30; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "Aʿrāḍ," fols. 213b–214a.

[39] *LS*, 30/357; *BSJ*, 5692; and see n. 1.

[40] J. Holmgren, "Marriage, Kinship and Succession under the Chʿi-tan Rulers of the Liao Dynasty," *T'oung Pao* 72 (1986), 44–91; WF, 398 ff.



his forefathers. He then headed the Qara Khitai's 1134 expedition against the Jin and, in 1141, led their left flank in the battle of Qatwān.[41]

The new empress came to the throne with much vigor, turning most of her attention westward. She decided to take advantage of the continuous upheavals in Khurāsān, where in winter 1165 the Qara Khitai took part in Masʿūd's invasion of Balkh and Andkhūd, by then under Oghuz dominion.[42] Balkh at least remained under Qara Khitai rule until 1198.[43] The new involvement of the Qara Khitai in Khurāsān probably motivated the local rulers to contact them. Thus around this time al-Muʾayyid Ayʾaba, Sanjar's former commander who from 1153 controlled parts of Khurāsān from his base in Nīshāpūr, sent to the Qara Khitai an exceptional pearl, together with precious stones and rhinoceros horns.[44]

The Qara Khitai's involvement in the west took a more aggressive turn in 1171/2 when they crossed the Oxus to fight against the Khwārazm Shāh Il Arslan.[45] Il Arslan, who in the mid–late 1160s had also become involved in the affairs of Khurāsān,[46] enraged the Qara Khitai because he had neglected to pay his annual tribute. Hearing that the Qara Khitai were coming, Il Arslan hurriedly collected his troops. But, falling sick on the way, he allowed his Qarluq commander, son of the former rebel ʿAyyār Beg, to lead his forces and he himself remained in Amūya, between Bukhara and Marw. The Khwārazmian army was badly defeated, and the Qara Khitai captured its commander. Il Arslan returned to Khwārazm, where he died in March 1172.[47] The Qara Khitai returned across the Oxus, and there is no reference in the sources to their having enforced a new tribute agreement on Khwārazm, perhaps because they were satisfied with their spoils from the attack.[48]

Il Arslan's death opened a long succession struggle between his two sons, Sulṭān Shāh and Tekish, in which the Qara Khitai found themselves deeply involved. The formal heir was Il Arslan's younger son, Sulṭān Shāh, and he was indeed enthroned with the help of his mother, Terken Khatun, who administered state affairs in his name. Yet Tekish, his older brother, who under their father had been the governor of Jand, had his own ambitions. Ignoring his brother's attempts to summon him to Khwārazm, he fled to the Qara Khitai court. There he asked for their help in installing himself as the new Khwārazm Shāh, promising to give them in return a large share in Khwārazm's treasures and an annual tribute. The

[41] *LS*, 30/356–7; for the position of women among the Khitans and the Qara Khitai see pp. 160–8.

[42] Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 162a; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 334.

[43] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:134.

[44] Kashānī, *Aʾrāyis al-jawāhir wa-nafāyis al-aṭāyib* (Tehran, 1966), 126. On al-Muʾayyid see Ibn al-Athīr, 11:358; Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, *Taʾrīkh-i Saljūqiyān-i Kirmān*, ed. M. T. Houtsma in *Recueil de textes relatifs à l'histoire des Seljoucides* (Leiden, 1886), 2:45, 48, 52, 53, 57, 74.

[45] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:375. Juwaynī dates this battle to 1169/70 (Juwaynī, 2:16–17, tr. Boyle, 289), but Ibn al-Athīr's dates are more plausible (Barthold, *Turkestan*, 336).

[46] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 148–9, 162–4; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 187.

[47] Juwaynī, 2:16–17, tr. Boyle, 289 (dated to April 1170); Ibn al-Athīr, 11:375; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 148; Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrikh*, 4:365; Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 243b; "Alfī," fol. 93a; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, 1:58, 256; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:52; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 336–7.

[48] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:375; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:52. Tekish's later promise to give an annual tribute (see below) implies that the Khwārazmian tribute was not automatically due.

empress sent her husband, Xiao Duolubu, known in the Muslim sources as *fūmā* (*fuma*, Chinese: "imperial son-in-law"), to Tekish's aid, with a huge army. When this army approached Khwārazm, Sulṭān Shāh and his mother fled, finding refuge with al-Muʾayyid, a recent vassal of Il Arslan. Tekish entered Khwārazm and was enthroned as Khwārazm Shāh on December 11, 1172. Fulfilling his obligations and rites towards the *fuma*, whatever they were, Tekish then sent the Qara Khitan commander back to Semirechye.[49] Later on Tekish was able by himself to repulse the troops of al-Muʾayyid, whom Terken Khatun induced to fight for her son's cause. Al-Muʾayyid was captured and executed in Khwārazm in July 1174. Sulṭān Shāh and his mother fled to Dihistān (in modern Turkmenistan on the eastern shores of the Caspian sea), but Tekish soon conquered the city and killed Terken Khatun. Sulṭān Shāh fled first to Tughan Shāh, al-Muʾayyid's son, in Nīshāpūr and then to the Ghūrids, the rulers of Ghazna and Afghanistan, who by 1174–5 had begun to take an active part in the struggle over Khurāsān.[50]

Though he owed his crown to the Qara Khitai, after restoring order in his realm and gaining military achievements without their help, Tekish was less willing to pay them. The endless demands of the Qara Khitai, which, according to Tekish's testimony, exceeded their original agreement, increased his dissatisfaction. Even more offensive was the arrogant behavior of the Qara Khitai emissaries, who "did not observe the rules of courtesy" and came to Khwārazm in ever-growing numbers. To his sense of personal insult, Tekish easily added the offense of the infidel Qara Khitai to Islam. It was against this background that in the mid-1170s Tekish killed the head of the emissaries, a scion of the Qara Khitai royal family, and ordered the Khwārazm notables (*aʿyān*) to kill every Qara Khitai who arrived in Khwārazm.[51]

The empress responded by summoning Tekish's brother, Sulṭān Shāh.[52] Sulṭān Shāh had already initiated contacts with the Qara Khitai in the past, first after the defeat of al-Muʾayyid's troops (1174) and then after he had realized that his later patron, the Ghūrid Sultan, would not challenge Tekish for his sake.[53] Rejoicing to hear about the estrangement between the Qara Khitai and his brother, Sulṭān Shāh was quick to arrive in Turkestan. There he stressed his popularity among both the people and the army of Khwārazm.[54] One of Pusuwan's last decisions was to send to his help a huge army under the leadership of her husband, the *fuma*,[55] whose last visit in Khwārazm had been when he deposed Sulṭān Shāh in favor of his brother.

[49] Juwaynī, 2:17–18, tr. Boyle, 290; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:377; ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 41–2.
[50] Juwaynī, 2:19, tr. Boyle, 291; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:377–8; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 337–8.
[51] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; "Alfī," fol. 95a; Juwaynī, 2:19, tr. Boyle, 292; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 167a; Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrīkh*, 4:367–8; *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, 137.
[52] Juwaynī, 2:19, tr. Boyle, 292; Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrīkh*, 4:368; *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, 137.
[53] Naṭanzī, "Taʾrīkh," fol. 174a; Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244b; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:303.
[54] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; Juwaynī, 2:20, tr. Boyle, 292; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 167a; Mīrkhwānd, *Taʾrīkh*, 4:368.
[55] Naṭanzī, "Taʾrīkh," fol. 174a; Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244b; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:254; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 157a; Juwaynī, 2:19–20, tr. Boyle, 292; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:303; "Alfī," fols. 95a–b.



Between these two missions to Khwārazm, the *fuma* might also have been active in the Qara Khitai eastern front,[56] where the 1170s offered new challenges to their northern and eastern realms. In the early 1170s the Qara Khitai were forced to send another imperial son-in-law, named Abensi (Erbuz?) northward against the (unidentified) Ycbulian and other tribes. Abensi was unable to overcome them and returned, while the conflict with the tribes continued at least until 1175.[57] In the same year, the chiefs of the Naiman and Qangli tribes, leading 30,000 households, came to surrender to the Jin, asking to receive its seals and tablets of authority in exchange for returning those of the Western Liao.[58] There is no information about more northern vassals of the Qara Khitai, such as the Qyrghyz, but even if those did not formally rebel, the attitude of the Qangli and the Naiman certainly limited the Qara Khitai's ability to subject the former to their rule. Territorially, the submission of the Naiman and Qangli to the Jin therefore limited the Qara Khitai eastern border to the Altai mountains (east of which the Naiman resided) and their northern border to Lake Balqash (north of which was the territory of the Qangli).

Despite these setbacks, the Qara Khitai did not yet give up their ambitions in the east, as manifested by their sending spies into Jin territory in 1177. It is hard to evaluate the Qara Khitai's intention in this act, but the Jurchens certainly took it seriously. Hearing about the capture of the four spies, the Jin emperor expressed his fear of a "border catastrophe" planned by the "Dashi" (the Qara Khitai), and took severe measures against the potential allies of the Western Liao. The Khitans of the Jin's northwestern route were forced to resettle in Manchuria, in the northeast, in continuation of the policy partly implemented after the rebellions of the 1160s. The emperor also promoted a long-term policy of encouraging Khitan assimilation with the Jurchens in order to avoid the reappearance of the 1160s insurgencies.[59] Another Jin reaction was the closing of the important border market of Suide in Shaanxi, along the Tangut–Jurchen border, in 1177. The Jin emperor explained this move as originating in his fear of a possible alliance between the Tanguts and the Qara Khitai, and by the turning of the markets into a meeting place of spies instead of merchants. He ordered the maintenance of strict surveillance against spies in the still-operating market. Only in 1181 was the Suide market reopened, following Xia requests.[60]

But whatever plans the Qara Khitai might have had, all were delayed by a scandal in the Western Liao palace in 1177. Empress Chengtian, who had gallantly sent

[56] This can be deduced from the fact that around the same time the empress conferred upon him the title Dongping wang ("prince of the eastern peace"): *LS*, 30/358.
[57] *JS*, 121/2637.
[58] *Ibid.*, also 7/165. The Naiman are rendered in the *Jin shi* as *Nianbaen*. For the identification of the two names see, e.g., PH, 220. For the Qangli's eastern location, see Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah, 1:292; PH, 105–16, esp. 109.
[59] *JS*, 88/1964.
[60] *JS*, 50/1114, 134/2870–1; *XXSS*, 38/4b, 8a; R. W. Dunnell, "The Fall of the Xia Empire: Sino-Steppe Relations in the Late 12th–Early 13th Centuries," in G. Seaman and D. Marks (eds.), *Rulers from the Steppe* (Los Angeles, 1991), 161–2; Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," 205; R. W. Dunnell, "Tanguts and the Tangut State of the Ta Hsia," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1983, 200–1.

her husband to fight in Khwārazm, developed in his absence a close relationship with his younger brother, Xiao Fuguzhi. She intended to get rid of her husband in order to spend more time with her lover, but her father-in-law foiled her plans: Xiao Wolila surrounded the palace with his troops and killed both the empress and her lover, his younger son.[61] Wolila was probably instrumental in installing the new, and last, Gürkhan, Yilie's son Zhilugu, who reigned for thirty-four turbulent years (1177/8–1211).

While most Qara Khitai military activity in their middle period was concentrated in the west, they did not lose their connection with the east: The Western Liao refused to recognize Jin superiority and perhaps even made some preliminary attempts to examine the possibility of restoring the "Great Liao" through military means. This option, however, was never implemented. For the Jin, the Qara Khitai remained a certain threat, especially because of their potential attraction to their fellow Khitans in north China. Yet we have no information on Qara Khitai attempts to arouse the Jin Khitans, and the occasional attempts by Khitans to find refuge in the Western Liao realm were curtailed by either logistical reasons (the terrain, lack of information)[62] or by political ones, such as other Khitans' objection to leaving their leadership in the hands of the remote Qara Khitai. The Jin Khitans might have been more responsive to a serious Western Liao attack on the Jurchens, as they were at the time of the Mongol conquest,[63] but logistical problems – such as the stand of the Tanguts (Jin vassals), the need to cross loosely ruled Mongolia, whose tribes were not easy to count on, and the Jin resettlement policy that had relocated most of the Khitans in faraway Manchuria – certainly hampered this possibility. Furthermore, the Qara Khitai now had their interests in Central Asia proper. In their middle period they were sometimes obliged to interfere in the west to ensure their vassals' submission (as in Khwārazm in 1172), and sometimes were tempted to act even beyond their realm by the promise of easy gain, e.g., in the case of Balkh (1165). The events in Khurāsān, Mongolia and Manchuria were therefore interconnected, and the growing interference of the Qara Khitai in the western affairs was at least partially at the expense of their ability to broaden their realm eastward or to reassert their authority over the Irtish tribes.

Yet, all in all, the middle period of Qara Khitai history was one of stability, and proved that the Western Liao empire was not a one-man state but had enough vitality to continue to exist even after its founder's death. Nonetheless, imminent problems were apparent: the growing number of nomads and the continuous tension between tribes and states became a problem as the Qara Khitai became not only the nomads' defenders but also a state determined to impose its rule over the different nomadic tribes. The quick assembling of a vast and complex empire, whose peripheries could act almost independently, also created problems, since it proved hard to

[61] *LS*, 30/357–8; cf. the garbled version in Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356.
[62] As for example in the case of the Khitan Xiao (Li) Heda, who rebelled against the Tanguts in 1140: *XXJ*, 565–7; *XXSS*, 35/9a; WF, 639; Dunnell, "Tanguts," 166.
[63] See Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 257–9.



enforce Qara Khitai authority in the northeast while part of their army was busy in the west. Another problem was the lack of charismatic leadership. Unlike Yelü Dashi, the three following Gürkhans reigned for relatively short periods and their authority was not absolute even among their fellow Qara Khitai, as proved by Xiao Wolila's actions. The fact that two out of the three rulers were women might have given rise to a certain antagonism or a degradation of the Gürkhan's status,[64] although I believe that Barthold and Bosworth took this point too far.[65] Zhilugu's longer reign seemed to have the potential to overcome at least some of these problems, but he was unable to cope with the continuous Khwārazmian threat on the one hand and the rise of a different kind of nomads – the Mongols – on the other.

[64] See, e.g., the discontent in Northern Liao ranks after Yelü Chun's widow was declared his heir (*SC*, 9/4b).
[65] Barthold, *Studies*, 1:104–5; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 189; cf. pp. 160–8.

CHAPTER 3

# The fall: between the Khwārazm Shāh and the Mongols

Like most states in early thirteenth-century Eurasia, that of the Qara Khitai fell to the Mongols, their conquest being one of the rare benign campaigns of Chinggis Khan. Yet long before Mongol armies appeared at Balāsāghūn, the repercussions of Chinggis Khan's activities in Mongolia were felt both among the eastern vassals of the Western Liao and in its capital. Moreover, the rise of the Mongols coincided with the strengthening of the Qara Khitai's problematic western vassal, the Khwārazm Shāh. This, combined with several inherent internal problems, made the reign of the last Gürkhan a rather turbulent period.

## Zhilugu's first years: the western front

The last Gürkhan was enthroned in 1178. He was Yilie's second son, Zhilugu, also known as Mānī, who reigned for thirty-four years under the reign title Tianxi ("heavenly blessing").[1]

The scandal that preceded Zhilugu's accession was not an easy legacy for the new Gürkhan. Zhilugu had to assert his authority against his ministers, such as Xiao Wolila, whose power was forcibly demonstrated in Pusuwan's dethronement. Furthermore, even within his own family his election was not undisputed, being challenged by his elder brother.[2] Another problem that became crucial in the early thirteenth century was enforcing the Gürkhan's authority over his provincial cadres, who manipulated the weakness of the central power to increase their demands on the subject population.[3] Their behavior encouraged Qara Khitai's vassals to look for other lords, especially when alternative powers were rising both east and west of Balāsāghūn.

The first rising force was the empire of Khwārazm, with which Zhilugu found himself deeply involved. At the time of his accession, a huge Qara Khitai army

[1] *LS*, 30/358; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 240.

[2] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357–8. Juwaynī describes a succession struggle between the two brothers of the Gürkhan, probably referring to a dispute between Zhilugu, who was Yilie's second son (*LS*, 30/358), and his elder brother (WF, 644).

[3] See, e.g., *BSJ*, 5692; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:266–7; Juwaynī, 2:90, tr. Boyle, 358.





under the leadership of the *fuma* (the late empress's husband) was accompanying Sulṭān Shāh to Khwārazm, planning to install him instead of his brother Tekish. Tekish, however, managed to halt this army by using the old Khwārazmian method of opening the Oxus dikes, thereby flooding his enemy's way. Disillusioned about the possibility of winning an easy victory, as well as about Sulṭān Shāh's popularity in Khwārazm, and perhaps aware of the upheavals in Balāsāghūn, the *fuma* decided to go back. Yet when Sulṭān Shāh offered him a generous sum, he left behind part of his troops. These troops fought with Sulṭān Shāh in Khurāsān against the Oghuz Turks, and in 1181 they helped him to seize Marw, Sarakhs, Nasā and Abīward.[4] After establishing his position in Khurāsān, Sulṭān Shāh sent the Qara Khitai back with great gains.[5] Having gone westward before 1178 and beginning their way back in 1181, the Qara Khitan force spent some three years in Khurāsān, in what was certainly their most western involvement ever. It is probably to this period that Jūzjānī alludes when he says that some of the rulers of Khurāsān paid tribute to the Qara Khitai.[6]

Yet the Qara Khitan involvement in Khurāsān had its price, and Tekish proved a vigorous rival. In the spring of 1181, when Qara Khitai forces were fighting in Khurāsān, the Qipchaqs under Qara Ozan Khan, newly related to Tekish by a marriage alliance, attacked from Jand and Sughnaq and wrought havoc in the Qara Khitai realm of Talas.[7] While Tekish's letters state that the whole region up to Talas was "liberated from the infidels" (by the mostly infidel Qipchaqs!),[8] the central place of Tayangu of Talas in later battles between the Qara Khitai, the Ghūrids and the Khwārazm Shāh, as well as the Qipchaq willingness to render the same services to Tekish the next year[9] imply that the Qipchaq attack was merely a successful raid.

Perhaps a successful raid is also the best way to describe Tekish's involvement in Bukhara around 1182, celebrated in a detailed *fatḥnāmah* (letter of conquest).[10] Tekish was probably chasing Qara Khitan forces that had come back from Khurāsān. According to his own description, he came for a great *jihād*, but faced quite violent opposition from the city dwellers who preferred "the net of the unbelief" to his Muslim army.[11] With the help of a Muslim religious leader, Tekish managed to break into the city walls, but was obliged to wait for next morning, hoping to obtain the city's surrender. Late at night, the city commander tried to

[4] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378–80; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:254; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 157a; Juwaynī, 2:19–22, tr. Boyle, 292–4; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:303; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:379–80; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244b; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a; "Alfī," fol. 95a–b; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:268.

[5] Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:268; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 136–7. [6] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96.

[7] Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-tawassul ilā al-tarassul* (Tehran, 1936), 158, 174–5. Since later Qara Khitan forces sent against the Ghūrids and Khwārazm Shāhs came from Talas (see below), it is probable that the Qara Khitan forces engaged in Khurāsān until 1181 also came from Talas. Their absence certainly facilitated the Qipchaqs' success.

[8] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 158, 174. [9] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 174 and see below.

[10] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 125 ff.; for the date see Barthold, *Turkestan*, 341–6. See also Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 191–2; Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 47–8; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 182–3.

[11] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 125–7; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 342.

escape with his followers. He was caught with a thousand men, whom Tekish generously pardoned.[12]

Tekish's *fatḥnāmah* is generally compatible with Ibn al-Athīr's version of Tekish's conquest of Bukhara, which he dated to 1198. Here too the conquest is violent, and yet the Bukharans are pardoned by Tekish despite their fierce opposition. In Ibn al-Athīr's version, the Bukharans even took a one-eyed dog (Tekish was blind in one eye), put him in royal clothes, and circumambulated the city's wall with him, ending their circle by sending the dog through the walls into the Khwārazmian ranks shouting, "This is your king."[13] Tekish became sufficiently involved in Bukhara's affairs to reaffirm the appointments of a religious functionary,[14] thereby probably rewarding his ally, but his presence in the city must have been short-lived. This is implied by the relative silence of the contemporary historians (nobody but Ibn al-Athīr mentions this conquest of Bukhara) and by the fact that Tekish himself referred to it only as "the business in Transoxania,"[15] instead of boasting of his achievement, as he did in connection with earlier successes against the Qipchaqs. Numismatic evidence reveals that in 1193 at the latest Bukhara was again ruled by Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn, the Qarakhanid vassal of the Qara Khitai,[16] and Ibrāhīm's praises were sung by the Bukharan *ṣadr* around the same time.[17] As for Tekish, in the 1180s he concentrated his attention mainly on his brother, whose status clearly challenged Tekish's legitimacy in Khwārazm.[18] Thus from 1182–3 onward he was mostly in Khurāsān. The struggle between the brothers continued on and off until Sulṭān Shāh's death in 1193 and also involved the Ghūrids, other contenders for control of Khurāsān.[19] Tekish was aware of the possibility of another Qara Khitan intervention on behalf of his brother, and in at least one of his attacks on Sulṭān Shāh, he took the trouble to send a sizable force of 3,000 men to guard the Oxus so that his brother could not escape to the Qara Khitai, as indeed he tried to do.[20] Strangely enough, we hear nothing about any further Qara Khitan response, either to Tekish's behavior towards their emissaries, or to his later provocations. The scandal and Zhilugu's initial weakness probably saved him from that.

A sort of rapprochement with Tekish must have taken place, probably before the latter's expedition to Iraq in 1194/5, when Tekish supposedly intended to send the Caliph's head to the Qara Khitai,[21] and certainly before 1198 when the Qara

[12] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 100–1, 127–30; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 342.
[13] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137–8; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 346–7.
[14] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 102 ff. [15] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 164.
[16] B. D. Kochnev, "Numizmaticheskie materialy dlia kharakteristiki vzaimootnoshenij Karakhanidov i Bukharskikh Sadrov," in *Dukhovenstvo i politicheskaia zhizn' na blizhnem i srednem vostoke v period feodalizma* (Moscow, 1985), 106.
[17] ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 148. [18] *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, 137.
[19] For Tekish–Sulṭān Shāh's rivalry see, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378–84; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:302–3; Juwaynī, 2:22–30, tr. Boyle, 294–301; "Alfī," fols. 94a–98a; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 189–91; Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 38–45.
[20] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:382; see also Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 27:203.
[21] The poet Ẓahīr al-Dīn Faryābī, quoted in Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:301. On Tekish's campaigns in Iraq, where he put an end to the Saljuq dynasty and later challenged the Caliph, see, e.g., Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 181–4.



Khitai assisted Tekish in his war against the Ghūrids.[22] The agreement must have been based on a financial settlement. The assertion of several important Muslim sources that Tekish dutifully paid his tribute to the Qara Khitai and ordered his son to continue to do so[23] probably alludes to this later arrangement.

## The eastern front

Another front on which Zhilugu had to continue his predecessors' actions was the eastern one. Unfortunately the information here is scanty and equivocal. There is some vague evidence that in 1185 the Qara Khitai tried to ally with the Tanguts in order to attack Jin through the Xi Xia's domains.[24] The border report with this information arrived from Song spies and was sent from Xuyi near the Jin–Xia border in Anhui. Though its accuracy was always in doubt, it fanned great expectations in Song ranks. A few days afterwards, when another report from Xuyi arrived, claiming that Jin forces of 8,000 men had destroyed the Qara Khitai, Song officials dismissed it as a Jin fraud.[25] In 1186 the Song emperor even considered elevating the title of the Xi Xia ruler from king to emperor and treating his state "according to the rights of equal kingdoms," if he let the Qara Khitai pass through his lands.[26] The emperor wished to instruct his border officials to sign an agreement with the Xi Xia, but his prime minister, Zhou Bida, dissuaded him. Zhou Bida, the main source for these developments, who had previously been the driving force behind the initiative, claimed that the Tanguts were untrustworthy and, furthermore, that it would be very hard to keep the contacts with them secret. If the Jin found out about the Song–Xia–Western Liao initiative – for example, by intercepting their correspondence as they had previously done – it might have serious implications for Song–Jin relations.[27] Indeed, in view of the more than twenty years of peace between the Song and the Jin following their agreement of 1161, the Song had much to lose from a premature exposure of their plans.[28] The emperor subsequently praised Zhou for his counsel, as "the information turned out to be untrue."[29] It is not clear to which part of the information this statement refers, and there is, therefore,

[22] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:135–6.
[23] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:302; Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 50. This image of Tekish, however, also represents a rhetorical device that stresses the contrast between Tekish and his son Muḥammad, whose extermination of the Qara Khitai is taken by these sources (and others) as a fatal mistake that brought the Mongols into the Islamic realm.
[24] Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, in *Zhou Yiguo wen zhong gong ji* (n.p., 1848), 3/9a, 10a; *SS*, 35/683, 486/14026; *XXSS*, 38/10b; *XXJ*, 610; WF, 647.
[25] Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, 3/12b; WF, 647.
[26] Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, 4/12a, 12b; WF, 648. Until then only the Liao, and after its fall the Jin, enjoyed an equal status with the Song. See, e.g., M. Rossabi, "Introduction," in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China among Equals* (Berkeley, 1983), 1–13.
[27] Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, 4/12b; WF, 648.
[28] For the peace between Song and Jin under "the golden age" of Shizong (Jin emperor 1161–89) see, e.g., Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 244.
[29] Lou Yue, *Mei gui ji*, *SBCG* ed., 93/27b; *SS*, 151/11970.

no way to ascertain whether such a Qara Khitai initiative indeed took place. The chances that it materialized and was later checked by Jin troops are much smaller. One might conclude with Tangut (later) sources that the Qara Khitai asked for the Xi Xia's cooperation against the Jin but nothing came of it.[30] Despite several local Tangut invasions of Jin borderlands and some mild commercial disputes, Jin–Xia relations in this period were generally peaceful,[31] and the Qara Khitai suggestion was therefore not that attractive.

That the Qara Khitai still had ambitions in the east in the late 1180s can be deduced from the Jin's actions. In 1188 Wanyan Xiang, a leading Jin official and an old hand in border warfare, coming back from a tribute-collecting journey among the northern tribes in Mongolia, provided his emperor with a detailed program, accompanied by a map, for restraining the Jin's subject tribes and keeping Dashi's kingdom under check. His recommendations were fully approved, and even earned him a promotion.[32] The surrender of one of the Western Liao's subject tribes to the Jin in 1190[33] might have been one result of the Jin's new policy.

The Jin's renewed interest in tribal affairs was connected to the upheavals in Mongolia, where in the last decades of the twelfth century many tribal feuds took place, and the future Chinggis Khan was beginning to assert his position.[34] The Jin plan that encompassed both the Qara Khitai and the Mongols implies that the Qara Khitai were somewhat involved in Mongolian affairs at this stage. They certainly became aware of the situation in Mongolia after the Kereyid ruler Toghril, later known as Ong Khan, found refuge in their realm.[35] Toghril was forced to flee his domains, an experience he had already undergone at least once in the past, in the face of a rebellion in his own family. In the early 1190s[36] he therefore passed through the realms of the Tanguts, Uighurs and the *huihui* (Central Asian Muslims, referring either to the Qarluqs in Almaliq or to the Qarakhanids in the Tarim basin), making his way to the Chu river. There he submitted himself to the Gürkhan,[37] probably asking for military help, which the Gürkhan had previously given to his western vassals. Though nothing positive is known about previous relations between the Kereyids and the Qara Khitai, the occurrence of the title Gürkhan among the Kereyids[38] might imply a certain connection. At any rate,

[30] *XXSS*, 38/10b; *XXJ*, 610.
[31] Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," 205; E. I. Kychanov, *Ocherk istorii Tangutskogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1968), 248.
[32] *JS*, 8/203, 94/2087; WF, 648. [33] *JS*, 94/2094; WF, 648; *ZK*, 89.
[34] For the events in twelfth-century Mongolia and the rise of Chinggis Khan see, e.g., Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, chs. 1–2; I. Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden, 1998), chs. 3–4; Han Rulin, ed. *Yuan chao shi* (Beijing, 1986), 1:64–83; Zhou Liangxiao, *Yuan dai shi*, ch. 3.
[35] *YS*, 1/6; *SH*, 151/79–80, 152/80, 177/104; *SHdR*, 1:73–5 (151–2), 98 (177); PH, 230–1; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:266, 420; WF, 649.
[36] For the date see Rashīd/Karīmī,1:266; Tu Ji, *Mengwuer shi ji* (Taibei, 1962), 2/15a; Allsen, "The Rise," 337, n. 18; A. S. Kadyrbaev, *Ocherki istorii srednevekovykh Ujgurov, Dzhalairov, Najmanov i Kireitov* (Almaty, 1993), 60. Cf. *XXSS*, 38/2a, 3a; Chen Dezhi, "Shisan shiji yiqian de Kelie Wangguo," *Yuanshi luncong* 3 (1984), 19–20; Togan, *Flexibility*, 73, 76–90.
[37] *SH*, 152/80, 177/104. [38] E.g., *SH*, 150/79.



Toghril's surrender to the Gürkhan was later criticized by his tribesmen,[39] and indeed it bore no fruit. After less than a year in the Qara Khitai domains, not finding security for himself and unable to live in peace with the Qara Khitai populace, Toghril rebelled against the Gürkhan. Going through the Uighur and Tangut lands, he made his way back to Mongolia, where in 1196, helpless and empty-handed, he asked for Temüjin's help.[40] It is perhaps significant that Toghril's alliance with the Jin, through which he received the title Ong (i.e. *wang*) Khan around 1197, began only after he was disillusioned about gaining support from the Qara Khitai. Toghril's desperate situation upon his return to Mongolia, when he had to feed himself by "milking his five goats and bleeding his camels," illustrates the logistic obstacles in the route from the Qara Khitai realm to Mongolia and China. These obstacles, together with the disturbances in the Uighurs' lands,[41] explain why the Qara Khitai refrained from helping Toghril. Indeed, contrary to earlier indications, until the flight of the Naiman prince Güchülüg into their realm in 1208, there is no evidence that the Qara Khitai either intervened in the Mongolian struggles or tried to direct the Mongol tribes against the Jin. A contributing factor for such conduct was the situation in the west, where the Qara Khitai found themselves involved first with the Ghūrids and then again with the Khwārazm Shāh.

## The Ghūrid affair: the battle of Andkhūd

In 1198 the Ghūrid ruler of Bāmiyān, Bahā' al-Dīn Sām, took advantage of the death of the Turkic ruler of Balkh, a vassal of the Qara Khitai, and seized the city. He read the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*) in the name of his uncle, the Ghūrid Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn, and halted the annual payments to the Qara Khitai.[42] The Qara Khitai were urged by the Khwārazm Shāh Tekish not to let this pass unpunished. Himself entangled with the Ghūrids in Khurāsān and fearing their intervention in his struggle with the Caliph, Tekish asked for Qara Khitan help against Ghiyāth al-Dīn, warning them that if they did not stop the latter now, Ghiyāth al-Dīn would take over Khwārazm and Transoxania, just as he had taken Balkh. The Qara Khitai sent a large army, headed by Tayangu, which crossed the Oxus. In 1198 this Qara Khitai army invaded the Ghūrid lands around Kurzubān (a town near Ṭaliqān near the border between Khurāsān and the mountains of Ghūr), killing and capturing many Ghūrid soldiers. They also sent a message to Bahā' al-Dīn Sām, demanding that he either evacuate Balkh or pay tribute for the city. Bahā' al-Dīn did not respond to this request, and soon the Qara Khitai lost the

[39] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:274–5; *SH*, 177/104.
[40] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:266, 420; *XXSS*, 38/3a. For the later relationship between Chinggis Khan and Ong Khan see, e.g., Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 67–86; Zhu Yaoting, *Chengjisihan quan zhuan* (Beijing, 1991), 137–45; Gao Wende, "Lun Tiemuzhen yu Wang Han de Lianmeng," in Chengjisihan yanjiusuo (ed.), *Chengjisihan yanjiu wenji 1949–1990* (Inner Mongolia, 1991), 303–12.
[41] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:266. [42] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:134.

ability to give orders. Several Ghūrid commanders joined forces and attacked the Qara Khitai by surprise at night. The Qara Khitai, peacefully asleep in their tents, were badly defeated. The next morning, however, realizing that they had not been attacked by Ghiyāth al-Dīn's main army, they gave a fair fight. Yet when Ghiyāth al-Dīn's reinforcements arrived, strengthened by many Muslim volunteers,[43] the Qara Khitai were unable to overcome them. They were defeated and many were slain or drowned in the Oxus.[44] When the Gürkhan heard about these developments he was furious, and asked Tekish to compensate him for the soldiers killed in the battle, allegedly demanding 10,000 dinars for each of the 12,000 men killed.[45] The demand was presented to Tekish by the same *juma* who had previously installed him in Khwārazm, and the latter stayed in Khwārazm waiting for the money.[46] Tekish turned to the Ghūrids for help. Ghiyāth al-Dīn agreed to help him if he obeyed the Caliph and restored to the Muslims the territories that had been taken earlier by the Qara Khitai.[47] It seems that Tekish agreed to these terms and with the Ghūrids' help gave a certain compensation to the Qara Khitai, thereby normalizing his relations both with them and with the Caliph.[48] Tekish died in 1200 and his son Muḥammad

[43] *Muṭawwi'ūn*, those who volunteer for holy war.

[44] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:135–6; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-'ibād* (Beirut, 1960), 430 probably refers to these battles; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 4:450; Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 343; Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 164–5.

[45] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:136–7. As Barthold had already noted, the sum in question (as well as the number of the victims) is grossly exaggerated, compared with the annual tribute of Khwārazm, which comprised 30,000 dinars (Barthold, *Turkestan*, 344–5, n. 4).

[46] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137; Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (Beirut, 1982–8), 22:194, quoting the lost book of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 1231), may be referring to this development when he stated that the Qara Khitai came to attack Tekish after his campaign in Iraq (1194–5), thereby placing the attack between 1194–5 and 1200.

[47] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137.

[48] This is never explicitly stated. Rather, following his report about the coming of the *juma*, Ibn al-Athīr presented the story of the conquest of Bukhara, which I dated to 1182. He claimed that when the Khwārazm Shāh refused to pay, a huge Qara Khitai force arrived at Khwārazm. They were defeated and Tekish pursued them up to Bukhara, which he conquered (Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137–8). I suspect that Ibn al-Athīr combined the story of the conquest of Bukhara, belonging to 1182, with the affairs of 1198, creating a sort of logical connection between them. Ibn al-Athīr's narration of the events, however, contradicts the assertion of Juwaynī, Jūzjānī, Rashīd al-Dīn and Abū Ghāzī about Tekish's friendly relationship with the Qara Khitai up to his death (see n. 23 above), as well as the proved good relations between Muḥammad, son of Tekish, and the Qara Khitai in the early years of Muḥammad's reign (see below). According to Juwaynī's detailed itinerary of Tekish in 1198, in which none of the above-mentioned developments is recorded, Tekish spent three months in Khurāsān (where the conflict with the Ghūrids probably took place), but later turned into Iraq, not into Transoxania (Juwaynī, 2:41, tr. Boyle, 310). The reconstruction suggested above can also more plausibly explain the improvement in Tekish's relations with the Caliph, who in 1199 gave him a patent acknowledging his authority over Iraq, Khurāsān and Turkestan (Turkestan referring to his successes among the Qipchaqs in early 1198 and early 1199) (Juwaynī, 2:41–3, tr. Boyle, 310–12; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:152; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:194, where the patent is connected to Tekish's interference with Rayy in 1199). Tekish is only presented as the ruler of Transoxania by certain followers of Ibn al-Athīr, who probably derived this information from his story about Bukhara (e.g., Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī *Mir'āt al-zamān* [Hyderabad, 1951–2], 8/2, 471, whence Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:292), but cf. Ibn al-Athīr himself, who described Tekish only as the ruler of Khwārazm, Jibāl, Rayy and parts of Khurāsān (Ibn al-Athīr, 12:156, whence Abū Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:98; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa al-sābi' al-ma'rūf bi'l-dhail 'alā al-rawḍatayn* [Cairo, 1947],



started his career as a loyal tributary of the Qara Khitai.[49] Soon after his accession the Qara Khitai and the Khwārazm Shāh joined forces once more against the Ghūrids.

The Ghūrids took advantage of Tekish's death to reconquer certain parts of Khurāsān, and in Marw and Sarakhs they even installed Hindū Khan, Muḥammad's nephew and main rival for the Khwārazm throne, as their subject ruler. After Muḥammad was officially crowned as Khwārazm Shāh in August 1200, he sent a letter to the Ghūrids expressing his disappointment with their behavior. In the letter he said that he had hoped that they would help him against the Qara Khitai instead of attacking him, and threatened that unless they returned his territories in Khurāsān, he would take them back with the help of the Qara Khitai and the Turks.[50] Indeed, in September 1201 Muḥammad started to reconquer Khurāsān, seizing Shadhyākh and advancing into Marw.[51] Hearing that his uncle was coming, Hindū Khan tried to escape to the Qara Khitai, but was murdered in Bāmiyān before reaching them.[52] Muḥammad's clashes with the Ghūrids over Khurāsān continued in the next few years, and he certainly benefited from Ghiyāth al-Dīn's death in January 1203, and from his successor, Shihāb al-Dīn's preoccupation with India.[53] But in August–September 1204 Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ghūri came back from India to regain Khurāsān. Instead of confronting Muḥammad in Herat, to which the latter laid siege in 1203, or in the Khwārazmian stronghold in Marw, Shihāb al-Dīn chose to attack Khwārazm.[54]

Muḥammad hurried to Khwārazm, and tried to block Shihāb al-Dīn's way by opening the dikes and burning the meadows, but only managed to delay the Ghūrid Sultan for about forty days.[55] Muḥammad and his mother, who ruled in the Khwārazmian capital while her son was in Khurāsān, raised the local population in Gurgānj and recruited soldiers from Khurāsān.[56] After the Khwārazmian forces suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Ghūrids near the Qarasu (a canal of the Oxus east of Gurgānj), Muḥammad escaped to the city with a few people[57] and asked for the Gürkhan's help.[58] The Qara Khitai, themselves inclined against the

17; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 21:331.) More important, Bukharan coins from 597/1200–1 bore only the name of the Qarakhanid Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn, (Kochnev, "Sadrov," 107) and Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh certainly conquered Bukhara once more in 1207 (see below). For all these reasons I have chosen to present the events in this sequence. See also Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 59–60; cf. *ZK*, 94, according to which Bukhara was taken twice, first in 1182 and then in 1198.

[49] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.

[50] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:173; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 351; Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 27:209 ff.; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:296. Cf. Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:306–7.

[51] Juwaynī, 2:48–50, tr. Boyle, 316–17; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:173.

[52] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:305.

[53] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:173–7, 180–2, 185–6; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307–8; Juwaynī, 2:48–54, tr. Boyle, 316–21; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fols. 161b–162a; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:382–5.

[54] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:186; Juwaynī, 2:54, tr. Boyle, 321; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *al-Jāmi' al-mukhtaṣar* (Baghdad, 1934), 123. Cf. Ibn Naṭīf, *al-Ta'rīkh al-manṣūrī* (Moscow, 1960), fols. 123b–124a.

[55] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:186; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124a.

[56] Juwaynī, 2:54–5, tr. Boyle, 321–2; 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 88.

[57] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; cf. Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:401; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297.

[58] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:186; Juwaynī, 2:54–5, tr. Boyle, 322; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 123.

Ghūrids due to their former conquest of Balkh, sent to his aid a large force, allegedly consisting of 10,000 or 40,000 men, under the leadership of Tayangu of Talas.[59] This force included the troops of the rulers and commanders of Turkestan, among them 'Uthmān, the new Sultan of Samarqand and his cousin Tāj al-Dīn Bilge Khan, the Qarakhanid ruler of Utrār.[60] This army crossed the Oxus and advanced towards Ghūr.[61]

Hearing about that, Shihāb al-Dīn, who was about to order his army to cross the Oxus into Gurgānj on the following day, withdrew from Khwārazm, and went southward in the direction of Balkh.[62] The exact sequence of the events from then on is not clear: Shihāb al-Dīn's forces were either pursued by the Khwārazmian army till Hizārasb and further to (the unidentified) Saifābād and then fell into the Qara Khitai's hands,[63] or else gained a first victory against the Qara Khitai, overtaking them when they were still exhausted from their march from Transoxania.[64] According to another version, it was the Qara Khitai who caught the tired Ghūrids who, retreating from Khwārazm through the desert, had to disperse their army. The Qara Khitai then attacked Shihāb al-Dīn, who was in the rear of his troops with 20,000 riders.[65] Their numerical superiority or a strong wind that blew in the Ghūrids' faces facilitated the Qara Khitan victory.[66]

All the sources, however, agree that the Qara Khitai pursued the Ghūrids to Andkhūd, a village between Marw and Balkh, where Shihāb al-Dīn tried to find refuge in its castle.[67] The Qara Khitai had broken into the castle's walls and nearly caught Shihāb al-Dīn when Sultan 'Uthmān intervened and convinced the latter to surrender.[68] Sultan 'Uthmān's mediation is generally ascribed to his Muslim solidarity with Shihāb al-Dīn, refusing to let a Muslim ruler fall into the hands of the infidels,[69] but the details of the negotiations and the gains of the Qara Khitai through them vary considerably. Juwaynī emphasizes the desperate situation of Shihāb al-Dīn, who was persuaded to offer anything he had, including elephants, horses, gold and silver and "movable and unmovable property" in return for his

[59] Juwaynī, 2:89–90, tr. Boyle, 357; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71 (10,000); Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b (40,000); Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307; Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 322; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:385; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 163a.

[60] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402; Nasawī, *Sīrat al-sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Mankubirtī* (Cairo, 1953), 66; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 323.

[61] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:186; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122.

[62] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:186; Juwaynī, 2:56, tr. Boyle, 322; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b.

[63] Juwaynī, 2:56, tr. Boyle, 322.

[64] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402 ff.; cf. Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b.

[65] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:214–15.

[66] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187, 188; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125a.

[67] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187, 188; Juwaynī, 2:55–6, 89, tr. Boyle, 322–3, 357; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307, 403; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh-i Tabaristān* (n.p., 1941), 168; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386, 5:71; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 163a; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 1:260.

[68] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403; Juwaynī, 2:56, tr. Boyle, 323–4; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:170–1; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b; Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:215; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386.

[69] Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:170–1; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b; Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:215; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386.



life.[70] This offer was approved by the Qara Khitai who actually might have stood behind Sultan 'Uthmān's negotiations with Shihāb al-Dīn.

Yet according to Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Isfandiyār and *al-Ta'rīkh al-manẓūrī*, the Qara Khitai gained a much more modest victory, Shihāb al-Dīn's situation was less desperate, and Sultan 'Uthmān's interference was more significant and positively not in favor of the Qara Khitai. Sultan 'Uthmān suggested to Shihāb al-Dīn that he send part of his army out of the castle by night, letting it return at daybreak, thereby creating the impression that he was getting reinforcements. When Shihāb al-Dīn did so, Sultan 'Uthmān urged the Qara Khitai to make peace with Shihāb al-Dīn before he could get more reinforcements, pointing to the great valor of Shihāb al-Dīn's commanders and saying that if the Qara Khitai did not manage to overcome him while he was so weak, they would never vanquish him. The Qara Khitai therefore asked for peace. Sultan 'Uthmān secretly informed Shihāb al-Dīn of what was going on, and following his advice the Ghūrid Sultan declined the peace proposal, claiming he was ready to fight and even expecting reinforcements. After some negotiation, Tayangu retreated to Transoxania, agreeing to keep the Oxus as the border between the Qara Khitai and the Ghūrids,[71] only after getting one elephant and a certain payment.[72] The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle: the havoc in Shihāb al-Dīn's kingdom after the battle and his insistence on revenging himself on the Qara Khitai after it (see below) suggest that Juwaynī's version is more credible. Yet one should note that despite their victory the Qara Khitai did not retake Balkh, which remained in Ghūrid hands,[73] perhaps satisfying themselves with the battle's loot.

Whatever benefits the Qara Khitai gained in Andkhūd, the real winner was the Khwārazm Shāh, who significantly strengthened his position in Khurāsān after the Ghūrids' defeat. This development worried Caliph al-Nāṣir, who urged the Qara Khitai to go against Muḥammad.[74] But at this stage the Qara Khitai saw no reason to challenge the Khwārazm Shāh, who had been instrumental in their victory and dutifully paid his tribute.[75] Al-Nāṣir was equally unsuccessful in his attempt to convince Shihāb al-Dīn to enter into alliance with the Qara Khitai against the Khwārazm Shāh.[76] After the battle of Andkhūd Shihāb al-Dīn willy-nilly agreed to conclude a cold peace with Khwārazm,[77] but was determined to enter Transoxania

[70] Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324; whence Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 163a; "Alfī," fol. 174a; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386.

[71] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188, whence Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:215.

[72] Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:171–2; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b. Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297 as well as Ibn Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122 and Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187 ignore Sultan 'Uthmān's part but say that the Qara Khitai agreed to conclude the peace and in return received one elephant.

[73] Juwaynī, 2:58, tr. Boyle, 325; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174b; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 245a.

[74] Juwaynī, 2:120, tr. Boyle, 390. [75] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.

[76] *Ibid.* Nāṣir was the one who had initiated the Ghūrid attack on the Khwārazmians in Tekish's time (see *Majma' al-ansāb*, 123). For Nāṣir's shifting alliances see A. Hartmann, *al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1180–1225): Politik, Religion, Kultur in der später Abbāsidenzeit* (Berlin and New York, 1975).

[77] Juwaynī, 2:58, tr. Boyle, 325; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174b; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 245a.

and avenge his defeat by the Qara Khitai.[78] Before being able to do so, however, Shihāb al-Dīn had to reassert his authority among his mamluks (slave soldiers), who had established themselves in Ghazna and Lahore following the rumors about his death in Andkhūd. After pacifying them, Shihāb al-Dīn had to crush the rebellion of the Khokars, inhabitants of the mountains between Lahore and Multān, who, incited by the same rumors, blocked the way from Lahore to Ghazna. This action prevented Shihāb al-Dīn from getting two years' worth of tribute from India, which he had asked to receive in advance for his military preparations against the Qara Khitai.[79] In February 1205 Shihāb al-Dīn went out against the Khokars, won a decisive battle against them by the end of March and, returning to Lahore with tremendous amounts of captives and spoils, ordered his troops to prepare for war with the Qara Khitai.[80] The first step in the planned assault was taken by the Ghūrid viceroy in Balkh, who in June–July 1205 seized Tirmidh from the Qara Khitai, destroying the Qara Khitan army that was stationed there and nominating his son as its governor.[81] Shihāb al-Dīn himself stayed at Lahore until February 1206. Beginning his journey to Ghazna, he ordered his viceroy in Bāmiyān to prepare for the invasion of Transoxania by building a bridge and a castle over the Oxus, and commanded his Indian soldiers to join him. All his plans, however, were cut short on March 13, 1206 when he was murdered by either a Khokar or an Ismaʿīlī,[82] an event that brought the Ghūrid effort against Transoxania to a sudden end.

## The Khwārazmian attack

The turmoil that followed Shihāb al-Dīn's death played into the hands of the Khwārazm Shāh, who took over several Ghūrid possessions in Khurāsān, including Balkh. Muḥammad first feared that the Qara Khitai would also take advantage of the situation and recapture Balkh and further Khurāsānian domains.[83] They, however, limited themselves to getting Tirmidh back. According to Ibn al-Athīr, in autumn 1206 the Qara Khitai and Muḥammad cooperated in seizing the city, besieging it from both sides. The Khwārazm Shāh had convinced the Ghūrid governor of Tirmidh to surrender to him and then handed the city over to the Qara Khitai, to the great fury of the Muslims.[84] Juwaynī does not mention Qara Khitai involvement in the capture of Tirmidh but says that it was handed over by Muḥammad's order to the Sultan of Samarqand, a Qara Khitai vassal.[85] In return

[78] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:209, 211, 213; Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 197b.
[79] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:209–10; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:314–15; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403.
[80] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:210.
[81] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:206; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jāmiʿ*, 152. Juwaynī does not mention this episode, but later on describes Muḥammad's conquest of Tirmidh from the Ghūrids.
[82] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:213; Juwaynī, 2:59, tr. Boyle, 325; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403.
[83] Juwaynī, 2:62, tr. Boyle, 329; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:312; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 163b; cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 352. For the turmoil in the Ghūrid kingdom following Shihāb al-Dīn's death see Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 164–5.
[84] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:231, 245.
[85] Juwaynī, 2:64, tr. Boyle, 331.



for Tirmidh, the Qara Khitai acknowledged the suzerainty of the Khwārazm Shāh over the whole of Khurāsān,[86] perhaps expecting that Muḥammad would continue to collect tribute from there too. However, Muḥammad probably understood the renouncing of Balkh as a sign of weakness, since several sources make a direct connection between the Khwārazm Shāh's takeover of Balkh and his subsequent challenge to the Gürkhan in Transoxania.[87]

Indeed, Muḥammad's growing power and ambition, combined with the disdainful attitude of the Gürkhan's tribute emissaries and the criticism he received in the Muslim world for giving Tirmidh back to the infidel Qara Khitai,[88] encouraged him to rebel. His interests coincided with those of Sultan ʿUthmān, the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand, and with those of the Transoxanian population. It is therefore hard to determine whether the initiative to rebel against the Qara Khitai came from Muḥammad, from Sultan ʿUthmān, or from the notables of Transoxania.[89] This is by no means the only question regarding the end of the Qara Khitai for which the sources offer three different answers, but on Muḥammad's conflict with the Qara Khitai they are especially contradictory: Juwaynī himself recounts two incompatible versions, one in the chapter about Khwārazm and the other in the chapter on the Qara Khitai, while earlier and later chapters often add further variations.[90] His descriptions are in turn different from those of the other principal sources, Jūzjānī and Ibn al-Athīr.[91] Unfortunately, Chinese sources almost completely ignore the developments in the west up to Güchülüg's appearance.[92] The sequence of the events and the chronology are therefore somewhat tentative. In general (but not in the details) I have followed Barthold's attempt to synchronize the different versions as much as possible.[93]

Despite the contradictions, however, the general atmosphere in Transoxania on the eve of Muḥammad's invasion was clearly one of rejection of the haughty attitude of the Qara Khitan viceroys and emissaries and of their oppressive demands, strengthened by a feeling of decline in Qara Khitan dynastic power. This in turn gave rise to religious dissatisfaction, though the religious factor was often used quite cynically.[94]

Ironically, when Muḥammad actually interfered in Transoxania in 1207, he came as the defender of the class to which the Gürkhan's representatives in Bukhara

[86] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:231.
[87] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:313; Naṭanzī, "Taʾrīkh," fol. 175a; Mūsawī, "Taʾrīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 245b.
[88] Juwaynī, 2:75, 89, tr. Boyle, 342, 357–8; Ibn al-Athīr, 12: 231.
[89] Juwaynī, 2:89–90, tr. Boyle, 358 (Muḥammad); Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jāmiʿ*, 237; Abū Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:109; Juwaynī, 2:123, tr. Boyle, 394 (ʿUthmān); Juwaynī, 2:74, tr. Boyle, 341 (notables).
[90] Juwaynī, 2:74–84, tr. Boyle, 341–52 (Khwārazm), 2:89–93, tr. Boyle, 358–61 (Qara Khitai), 1:46–56, tr. Boyle 61–74 (Güchülüg), 2:122–6, tr. Boyle, 392–6 (the end of the Qarakhanids).
[91] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307–9, 2:96–7; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259–71.
[92] On Güchülüg see below. The only exception is *BSJ*, which claims that the *huihe* (Muslims, here referring to Khwārazm) are those who annihilated the Qara Khitai (*BSJ*, 5692).
[93] See Barthold's discussion in *Turkestan*, 355–61.
[94] Juwaynī, 2:74, 75, 90, 123, tr. Boyle, 341, 342, 358, 394; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 43. See ch. 6.

belonged. He was called by the local notables to quell the rebellion of Sanjar. Sanjar, son of a shield-maker, revolted against the local leadership of Bukhara, the *ṣadr*s of the Burhān family. This Ḥanafite family led Bukhara from the early twelfth century, and retained its position under the Qara Khitai, taking responsibility for collecting the city's taxes and enjoying the Gürkhan's full backing.[95] In the early thirteenth century, however, the *ṣadr* Muḥammad son of Aḥmad had accumulated enormous wealth and his pompous and arrogant attitude even earned him the nickname *ṣadr jahnam* (*ṣadr* of hell) instead of his usual title of *ṣadr jahān* (*ṣadr* of the world).[96] Sanjar probably took advantage of the *ṣadr*'s absence while performing the *ḥājj* in 1206, rebelled against him, enthroning himself as *malik* (king) and treating the notable class with contempt.[97]

Representatives of the Burhān family first contacted the Qara Khitai, going all the way to their *ordu* to ask for help. The Qara Khitai reaffirmed the *ṣadr*s' right to rule Bukhara, but did not otherwise interfere on their behalf.[98] Perhaps the notables of Bukhara and Samarqand then asked for Muḥammad's help, complaining of the Qara Khitai tyranny and asking him to release them from infidel rule.[99]

The Sultan of Khwārazm, having his own reasons to challenge the Qara Khitai,[100] responded to this request, if not before making careful preparations. Those included a series of nominations in Khurāsān and other parts of Iran, as well as a compromise with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Ghūrid Sultan, on certain domains in Ghūr. Muḥammad did not manage, however, to pacify the former Ghūrid city of Herat, and had to leave troops to besiege it.[101] Muḥammad also sent messages, trying to ally himself with the Qarakhanid rulers of Transoxania and Farghāna. The senior Qarakhanid ruler, Sultan 'Uthmān of Samarqand, gladly agreed to cooperate with Muḥammad. Apart from resenting the Gürkhan's excessive demands and infidel rule, 'Uthmān was personally insulted by the Gürkhan's refusal to give him his daughter in marriage.[102]

Sultan Muḥammad crossed the Oxus in 1207. He entered Bukhara, this time receiving a warm welcome from its inhabitants, and exiled Malik Sanjar to Khwārazm. He then continued to Samarqand, leaving one commander as his representative in the city.[103] The Qara Khitai sent an army against the Khwārazm Shāh. Warfare continued for quite a long time, at first without decisive results.[104] A change occurred perhaps when some Khwārazmians changed sides: Tört-Aba, the newly appointed Khwārazmian commissioner in Samarqand, and the *isfahbād*

[95] See pp. 44, 124 and 183–4.
[96] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257–8; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2: 529; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 57, 59; Ibn Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 202; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68–9.
[97] *Ibid*. Juwaynī, 2:74–5, tr. Boyle, 341–2; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 51.
[98] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 517, and see the slightly different version in the Browne edition (2:385); cf. C. E. Bosworth, "Al-e Borhān," *EIr* 1 (1985), 754.
[99] Juwaynī, 2:74, tr. Boyle, 341. [100] Juwaynī, 2:75, tr. Boyle, 342.
[101] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259–62.
[102] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; Juwaynī, 2:76, 90, 122–3, tr. Boyle, 342–3, 358–9, 393.
[103] Juwaynī, 2:76, tr. Boyle, 342–3; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:260.
[104] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:260.



of Kabūd-Jāma (in Ṭabaristān) contacted the Gürkhan and offered to support his side if he would grant Khwārazm to Tört-Aba and Khurāsān to the *isfahbād* after the battle. The Gürkhan hastily agreed, although he was never able to fulfill those promises, and this mutiny shifted the balance slightly in favor of the Qara Khitai. Both sides retreated, but not before the Qara Khitai had taken many captives, including perhaps the Khwārazm Shāh himself.[105] According to Ibn al-Athīr, the Khwārazm Shāh was captured together with his commander, Shihāb al-Dīn Mas'ūd. The latter suggested that Muḥammad conceal his identity and pretend to be his servant, and so he did. The Qara Khitai man who captured them, impressed by the respect the servant showed towards his master, agreed to send the servant back to Khwārazm to bring ransom for his lord. Unknowingly he therefore let the Khwārazm Shāh return to his lands. The trustworthiness of this story has been questioned by Barthold, who saw it as a mere anecdote, identical to the one told about the Saljūq Sultan Malikshāh and his vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk.[106] Yet other sources also report that Muḥammad was captured by the Qara Khitai, who did not recognize their captive, and Juwaynī explained that this was due to his custom of wearing his rivals' clothes during the battle.[107]

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Muḥammad was absent for only three days,[108] but he certainly was away long enough to throw Khurāsān into turmoil. Hearing about Muḥammad's absence, both his brother 'Alī Shāh, his viceroy in Ṭabaristān, and Közli, his commander in Nīshāpūr who had been left to besiege Herāt, tried to install themselves as rulers of Khurāsān.[109] When Muḥammad came back to Khwārazm both usurpers escaped, 'Alī Shāh to Fīrūzgūh and Közli to his kinswoman Terken Khatun at Khwārazm, where he soon found his death. In 1208–9 his son tried to escape to the Qara Khitai but was killed on the Oxus by Khwārazmian troops.[110] Muḥammad was quick to restore his position in Khurāsān, completing the conquest of Herāt, and then conquered Fīrūzgūh. In 1208–9 he executed both his rebellious brother and the latter's protector, the Ghūrid Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd, thereby exterminating the Ghūrid dynasty.[111] The Qara Khitai's inability to take advantage of this turbulent period suggests that their indecisive victory was not easily won. Moreover, despite his setback in Transoxania, Muḥammad still held Bukhara, where he had rebuilt the citadel in 1207–8.[112]

[105] Juwaynī, 2:83–4, tr. Boyle, 351; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:260, 263. Juwaynī narrates this episode as if it happened much later, after 1210. Yet the story of this mutiny preceded Juwaynī's account of the capture of the Khwārazm Shāh, which, according to Ibn al-Athīr (supported by Juwaynī's account on Közli, see n. 110 below), happened around 1207–8. See also Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 73; cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 365.
[106] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:263–4; whence, e.g., Abū Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:109; Ibn Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 240; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 360 and see Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ta'rīkh-i guzīda* (Paris, 1903), 220–3 for the Saljūq anecdote.
[107] Juwaynī, 2:84, tr. Boyle, 352; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 166a; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 175a; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 245b; the same story is told by Dhahabī (*Ta'rīkh*, 61:69) for 610/1213–14, in which the Khwārazm Shāh returned from his captivity among the Tatars, having concealed his identity by wearing Tatar clothes.
[108] Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 166a; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 245b.
[109] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:263–4. [110] Juwaynī, 2:72, tr. Boyle, 339.
[111] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:264–7; Juwaynī, 2:69–72, tr. Boyle, 336–9. [112] Narshakhī, *Ta'rīkh*, 23.

Although the Qara Khitai let Muḥammad hold Bukhara and did not interfere with his conquests in Khurāsān, they were not ready to allow him to avoid paying tribute for long. Since his attack on Transoxania, Muḥammad had withheld tribute, manifesting this by killing the Qara Khitan tribute emissary. Two years after that, around 606/1209–10, the Gürkhan's chief vizier, Maḥmūd Tai, came to claim the money. The Khwārazm Shāh, who was planning a campaign against the Qipchaqs, did not want to sever his relations with the Gürkhan at this point. He therefore left the handling of the affair to his mother, absenting himself from his capital. Terken Khatun received the Gürkhan's emissaries with great respect and paid the full annual tribute. She also sent some Khwārazmian notables with Maḥmūd Tai to apologize for the delay and to assure the Gürkhan that Khwārazm was still his loyal vassal. Unimpressed by these gestures, Maḥmūd Tai reported that Muḥammad's ambitions had no limits and that therefore he was unlikely to pay tribute again.[113]

## Troubles in the east

But Muḥammad was not the only one who had tried to break out of the Qara Khitai's grip. Around 1204 the Gürkhan's troops had quelled a rebellion in Khotan and Kashgar.[114] The Gürkhan seized the son of the khan of Kashgar, taking him as a hostage to Balāsāghūn. He also used this conflict to get rid of another potential rebel, the Qarluq Arslan Khan from Qayaliq. Called on to render military help to the Gürkhan against the rebels, Arslan Khan was later manipulated into committing suicide, in order for his son to be allowed to succeed him.[115] Yet the Gürkhan's ability to pacify his eastern vassals declined considerably in the later half of the first decade of the thirteenth century. This was not only due to Muḥammad's threat from the west, but also due to the rise of a new force in Mongolia. In 1206 Temüjin assumed the title Chinggis Khan, having united most of the Mongol tribes after centuries of dissension. Chinggis Khan continued to assert his authority thereafter among the tribes of western Mongolia, the Qyrghyz, the Merkid and the Naiman. Many refugees from the battles in Mongolia found their way to the Qara Khitai realm, contributing to the disorder in the kingdom and spreading rumors about the new power.[116]

As a result of Chinggis Khan's victory in 1208 over the Merkid and the Naiman, in spring 1209 the Uighurs decided no longer to comply with the excessive demands and the disdainful attitude of their *shaojian*. The Qara Khitai commissioner was pursued by the Uighur populace at Qara Khojo. He was forced to find refuge

[113] Juwaynī, 2:75, 89–90, tr. Boyle, 342, 357–8; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 361 for the date.
[114] Juwaynī, 1:48, 56, tr. Boyle, 65, 74; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 132; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 363; Pritsak, "Karachaniden," 44.
[115] Juwaynī, 1:48, 57, tr. Boyle, 65, 74.
[116] On Chinggis Khan's rise and career see, e.g., Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 42–144; Allsen, "The Rise," 333–65.



in a high building, where he was put to death.[117] The Uighur ruler, the Idi-qut Barchuq Art Tegin, sent messengers to report the incident to the Western Liao, perhaps uncertain about his future way, though certain functionaries at his court had already begun to desert to the Mongols.[118] When Chinggis Khan's messengers arrived at the Uighur court soon afterwards, however, the Idi-qut showed them great respect. He informed the Mongol emperor that he had broken his alliance with the Qara Khitai and offered him the suzerainty of his kingdom, asking to be treated as his fifth son.[119] Chinggis Khan agreed to give him his daughter, thereby making him a son, but demanded that the Idi-qut come personally to his court, bringing a sizable tribute. The Idi-qut soon had a chance to show his loyalty to his new lord, as some Merkid refugees found their way to his kingdom. The Idi-qut fought them around late 1209 or early 1210 and managed to drive them off. He hastened to report his loyal behavior to Chinggis Khan, accompanying the report with tribute. The Idi-qut's audience with Chinggis Khan on the Kerulen river, however, took place only in 1211, after the latter had returned from his campaign against the Tanguts, and when the Gürkhan's fortunes were clearly declining.[120]

In the same year, 1211, another vassal of the Gürkhan, the Qarluq Arslan Khan, surrendered to Chinggis Khan, also manifesting his breaking of the alliance with the Qara Khitai by murdering their hated commissioner.[121] Arslan Khan indeed had had quite enough of the Gürkhan, who had orchestrated his father's suicide, but he tried to act against Zhilugu in the Qara Khitan political sphere.[122] His surrender came only after a Mongol detachment, headed by Chinggis Khan's messenger Qubilai Noyan, appeared in his town, thereby brutally violating the Gürkhan's suzerainty.[123] Arslan went to Chinggis Khan with presents, including one daughter, and was favorably received, even getting a young Mongol princess to marry, though his title was degraded from Arslan Khan to Arslan Sartaqtai (meaning Tajik, i.e., Muslim).[124]

The Gürkhan could not react to those provocations since by this time the implications of Chinggis's actions in Mongolia were felt not only among his vassals but also in his main court. Around late 1208 the Gürkhan gave refuge to Güchülüg, son of Tayang Khan of the Naiman, one of the more persistent enemies of Chinggis Khan. After Chinggis Khan had killed his father in 1204, Güchülüg escaped to his uncle, Buyirugh Khan. In 1208, when Buyirugh also was defeated by the

[117] Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji* (*SBCG* ed.), 11/5a; *SWQZL*, 59a; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338; Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 45; *YS*, 122/3000, 124/3046.
[118] *YS*, 124/3046.
[119] Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 339; Juwaynī, 1:33, tr. Boyle, 45; *SWQZL*, 59a–b; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5a; *YS*, 1/14; *SH*, 238/172; Ke Shaomin, *Xin Yuan shi* (Beijing, 1979), 3/19.
[120] *SH*, 238/172–3; *SWQZL*, 60a–61a (translated in Buell, "Early Mongol Expansion," 10–12); *YS*, 122/3000. Juwaynī, 1:33, tr. Boyle, 45; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338; Allsen, "The Rise," 350. On the special relations between the Uighurs and the Mongols thereafter see T. T. Allsen, "The Yuan Dynasty and the Uighurs in Turfan in the 13th Century," in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China among Equals* (Berkeley, 1983), 243–80.
[121] Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 75; *SWQZL*, 61a; *YS*, 1/15; Ke Shaomin, *Xin Yuan shi*, 3/20.
[122] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 43–4. [123] *SH*, 235/171; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 38.
[124] *Ibid.*; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 350; Rashīd, *Compendium*, 1:78 and n. 1.

Mongols on the Irtish, Güchülüg fled westward. Going through Besh Baliq to Kucha, wandering without food through the Tian Shan, where he lost some of his original followers, he made his way through the Qarluq lands to Balāsāghūn.[125] Güchülüg arrived at the Gürkhan's court with a small group of people – either as a prisoner, caught by a detachment of the Gürkhan's army, or of his own free will.[126] The Gürkhan welcomed Güchülüg, seeing in the Naiman prince a potential ally who could attract military reinforcements, which the Qara Khitai certainly needed due to the behavior of their vassals and the threat of Chinggis Khan's growing power. The former ties of the Qara Khitai and the Naimans probably contributed to the warm reception.[127] Güchülüg remained in attendance on the Gürkhan in Balāsāghūn, and even received the Gürkhan's daughter in marriage.[128] When, however, he became aware of the deterioration in the Gürkhan's position in the west and of the rebellions in the east, and after he had acquired considerable support among the Gürkhan's army commanders,[129] Güchülüg asked the Gürkhan's permission to gather his tribesmen. He explained his request by saying that Chinggis Khan was busy in China (i.e., with the Tanguts), and would therefore not interfere with his actions, while his tribesmen, the Naiman, currently wandering in the regions of Emil, Besh Baliq and Qayaliq and being molested by everybody, could serve as an important addition to the Gürkhan's troops.[130] Zhilugu gave him his permission, and conferred upon him the title Khan, even adding presents and some robes of honor.[131] Acquiring military reinforcement through Güchülüg was certainly one of the main motives for the Gürkhan's congenial attitude towards the Naiman prince, and by sending him eastward he probably also hoped to recover his authority over his rebellious Uighur vassals. Güchülüg left around summer or autumn 1209. He collected his tribesmen, together with other Mongol refugees, and also obtained the allegiance of "all those in the army of the Qara Khitai who had some connection with him."[132] This designation might refer to a certain ethnic component in the Qara Khitan army. Yet part of Güchülüg's attractiveness for the Qara Khitai soldiers lay not in his ethnic origin but in the permission he gave them to plunder and ravage the Qara Khitai territories, contrary to the Gürkhan's policy. The numerous captives taken during those raids also enlarged Güchülüg's forces.[133] Güchülüg had probably already formed a connection with Sultan Muḥammad and, taking

[125] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:334; Juwaynī, 1:46, tr. Boyle, 62; *YS*, 121/2993; *SH*, 133/198.
[126] Juwaynī, 1:46, tr. Boyle, 62 provides the two versions. According to Rashīd al-Dīn (cited in Boyle's translation, 62 n. 5), Güchülüg arrived of his own free will.
[127] The Naimans were vassals of the Qara Khitai at least until 1175 when they surrendered to the Jin (*JS*, 121/2637; and see ch. 2). A certain relationship might have survived later, as *LS*, 69/1123 mentioned the Naiman among the subject tribes of the Western Liao.
[128] Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 553; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:334; Rashīd in Boyle's Juwaynī, 62, n. 5; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 92; Rāzī, *Haft Iqlīm*, 270; Juwaynī described Güchülüg's wife only as a maiden of the Qara Khitai (Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 64), or as a daughter of their great commander and a fiancée of the Gürkhan (Juwaynī, 2:93, tr. Boyle, 361).
[129] Juwaynī, 1:46, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 63, 359; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71–2; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335.
[130] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335–6; Juwaynī, 1:46–7, 2:90–1, tr. Boyle, 63, 359.
[131] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359. [132] Juwaynī, 1:47, tr. Boyle, 63.
[133] Juwaynī, 1:47, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 63, 359; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335–6.



advantage of the Qara Khitai engagement in Transoxania in spring–summer 1210, his combined forces ravaged the Qara Khitan treasury in Uzgand, after which they continued to Balāsāghūn.[134]

## The battle with Tayangu

Renewed preoccupation in Transoxania prevented the Gürkhan from taking immediate action against Güchülüg. Soon after Güchülüg's departure, Zhilugu summoned his vassals, including 'Uthmān of Samarqand. When the latter refused to come, thereby manifesting his revolt, the Gürkhan personally went to Samarqand, leading an army allegedly 30,000 strong. The Qara Khitai recaptured Samarqand, but refrained from plundering it. However, when rumors about Güchülüg's activities began to arrive, the Qara Khitai forces evacuated Samarqand, turning against this latter threat.[135] Hearing of this, the Khwārazm Shāh entered Samarqand. There he received the formal surrender of Sultan 'Uthmān, on whose coins Muḥammad's name appears from 606/1209–10 onward.[136] Together with Sultan 'Uthmān and other Qarakhanid princes the Khwārazm Shāh advanced eastward.[137] Tayangu, the Qara Khitan commander of Talas, went to meet them with an "enormous army." The battle took place in August–September 1210 either near the Jaxartes in the Ilamish steppe, in the northern part of Andijān,[138] or closer to Talas.[139] Militarily speaking, the battle was not decisive: the two armies attacked each other several times, the left wing of each army driving back the opposing right wing, after which both sides retreated.[140] With regard to morale, however, the Qara Khitai suffered a heavy blow when their commander, Tayangu, was taken captive and led into Khwārazm, leaving his troops retreating eastward in turmoil. Whether Sultan Muḥammad treated Tayangu well[141] or put him to death and flung his body into the Oxus,[142] he certainly tried to make the most out of his capture in terms of prestige, adopting from then on the titles "the second Alexander," "Sultan Sanjar" and "God's shadow upon earth."[143] On a more practical level, Sultan 'Uthmān was taken to Khwārazm, where he received a Khwārazmian princess to marry and was therefore detained in Khwārazm for nearly a year.[144] While Juwaynī emphasizes the great esteem that the Qarakhanid ruler enjoyed in Gurgānj,

[134] Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 64. [135] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359.
[136] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359; Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 33; M. N. Fedorov, "Politicheskaia istoriia Karakhanidov v XII- nachale XII v.," *Numizmatika i Epigrafika* 14 (1984), 113; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 187–8. Juwaynī, 2:76, tr. Boyle, 342–3 ascribed Samarqand's surrender to an earlier phase in the Khwārazm–Qara Khitai conflict, after Muḥammad's first invasion of Transoxania, but 'Uthmān's coins from 605/1208–9 still bore only his name (Kochnev, Fedorov, Karaev, as cited here).
[137] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359–60; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307–8.
[138] Juwaynī, 2:77, tr. Boyle, 344. [139] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 360; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 101.
[140] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 360; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268.
[141] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:308; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268. [142] Juwaynī, 2:81, tr. Boyle, 349.
[143] Juwaynī, 2:78–80, tr. Boyle, 346, 349. For those titles see also 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 43–4, 483–4.
[144] Juwaynī, 2:124, tr. Boyle, 394; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:267–8.

numismatic evidence reveals a steady decline in his titles.[145] In 'Uthmān's absence Muḥammad swooped down upon the Qarakhanid domains, seizing the whole of Transoxania up to Farghāna, gaining control over Utrār in 607/1210–11 and Uzgand in 608/1211–12, and replacing the Qara Khitai's viceroys with his own.[146] The unmistakable resistance that those actions raised, at least in Utrār and Ighnaq,[147] suggests that despite Muḥammad's propaganda, several local rulers still believed in the Qara Khitai's ability to wreak their revenge on Khwārazm.

## Between Muḥammad and Güchülüg

Muḥammad was able to do all this despite his indecisive victory because the retreating Qara Khitan army, deeply engaged with Güchülüg, never came back to Transoxania. Moreover, some of Muḥammad's actions, e.g., the subjugation of Uzgand, probably took place only after Güchülüg's seizure of the Gürkhan in autumn 1211. Muḥammad certainly tried to make the most out of Güchülüg's activities, yet the extent of the Khwārazm Shāh's military involvement with the Qara Khitai after the battle with Tayangu and of his cooperation with Güchülüg is unclear. The connection between Güchülüg and Muḥammmad began with Güchülüg's initiative that roughly coincided with the battle against Tayangu.[148] According to Juwaynī, Muḥammad and Güchülüg decided to join forces against the Gürkhan, attacking simultaneously from east and west, and they agreed that if Güchülüg were to be victorious over the Gürkhan, he would have the Qara Khitai territories up to Fanākit (i.e. excluding Transoxania), while if Muḥammad preceded him, he would take over the Gürkhan's territories up to Kashgar and Khotan or up to Almaliq, leaving Jungaria and the Naiman domains to Güchülüg.[149] I agree with Barthold that this scheme is a bit too neat, and that Ibn al-Athīr's version is more plausible.[150] According to him, when Güchülüg was about to attack the Gürkhan, both sides contacted Muḥammad asking for his help, both agreeing to acknowledge in return his rights to the territories he had already seized from the Qara Khitai.[151] The Gürkhan also offered him his daughter in marriage and added many precious

[145] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 33–34. In 605/1208–9, before his submission to Khwārazm, the title inscribed on 'Uthmān's coins was *Ulūgh Sulṭān al-Salāṭīn* ("the Great Sultan of the Sultans"); in 606/1209–10 he is called *al-Sulṭān al-A'ẓam* ("the Most Exalted Sultan") and in 607/1210–11 *al-Sulṭān al-Mu'aẓẓam* ("the Exalted Sultan").

[146] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268–9; Juwaynī, 2:81, tr. Boyle, 348–9; Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 34.

[147] Juwaynī, 2:80, 83, tr. Boyle, 348, 350. For Utrār cf. Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66: according to him Bilge Khan of Utrār was the first Qara Khitan vassal to join Muḥammad, though afterwards he revolted against him. Ighnaq (or Aghnāq) was a town in Turkestan, a dependent of Fanākit (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 1:225; Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 350, n. 1). Barthold suggested identifying it with Yughank, a village in Samarqand (Barthold, *Turkestan*, 133, 356 n. 7).

[148] Juwaynī, 1:46, 2:83, tr. Boyle, 63, 351; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 99; see also Juwaynī, 2:125–6, tr. Boyle, 396; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:270; cf. Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:72.

[149] Juwaynī, 1:47, 2:83, 125–6, tr. Boyle, 64, 351, 396; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 230.

[150] Barthold, *Turkestan*, 363. But note that according to Ibn al-Athīr 12:271, Muḥammad also claimed that he and Güchülüg should split the Qara Khitai lands between them.

[151] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:270.



gifts.[152] Muḥammad promised support to both of them, waiting to see the results of the conflict before taking sides.[153] Passing through Samarqand on his way to the field and noting the disorder in the city, Muḥammad decided to summon back Sultan 'Uthmān, even though his year in Khwārazm was not over yet.[154] A tentative dating for these events is therefore spring 1211. It is unclear what part, if any, Muḥammad played in the later engagements between Güchülüg and the Gürkhan.

According to Juwaynī, the Gürkhan's troops that left Samarqand returned to the environs of Balāsāghūn, and confronted Güchülüg near the (unidentified) *Chīnūch. The Gürkhan's troops defeated Güchülüg, captured many of his soldiers and regained a sizable part of the Gürkhan's sacked treasury, which, however, remained divided among his army commanders. Pursued by the Qara Khitan army, Güchülüg retreated eastward, in the direction of the original Naiman realm, where he began to reorganize his army.[155] It was probably around this time that Sultan 'Uthmān rebelled against Muḥammad and contacted the Gürkhan, suggesting that he renew his vassalage. Then, or perhaps earlier, he obtained a Qara Khitai princess to marry, but the Gürkhan could offer him no real help in his further conflict with Khwārazm.[156] Meanwhile, the remnants of Tayangu's troops made their way back to the Gürkhan, their confusion manifested by plundering their own territories, contrary to the Gürkhan's earlier commands.[157] When they arrived at Balāsāghūn, the city dwellers, believing that Sultan Muḥammad was coming any minute to liberate them, closed the gates and refused to admit the Qara Khitan troops into the city. Balāsāghūn's inhabitants fought the Khitans for sixteen days, ignoring the proposals of the Gürkhan's vizier, Maḥmūd Tai, who had come to pacify the uprising. In the meantime, the Gürkhan's army joined the remnants of Tayangu's troops. The united Qara Khitan army used the elephants gained in the battle of Andkhūd to smash the city's gates. Entering Balāsāghūn, they massacred its population, allegedly slaying 47,000 men, and plundered its ample property. At this stage, Maḥmūd Tai, worried about the empty Qara Khitai treasury and even more about the fate of his personal wealth, suggested recovering the treasury that had been retrieved from Güchülüg. This unpopular order was never implemented, but it sufficed to alienate wide segments of the Qara Khitan troops from their monarch.[158]

Zhilugu himself, if we believe the *Liao shi*, found this time suitable for going on a hunt, unmoved by the dissolution of his kingdom.[159] Güchülüg, however, did not let him enjoy his hunting. In autumn 1211 he and 8,000 men ambushed and captured the unsuspecting Zhilugu in the vicinity of Kashgar. Güchülüg's timing was motivated by the alienation of both army and citizens from the Gürkhan, of which he was aware.[160] No doubt "Muḥammad's victories" also contributed to

[152] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44. [153] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:270. [154] Juwaynī, 2:124, tr. Boyle, 394.

[155] Juwaynī, 1:48, 2:124, tr. Boyle, 64, 360; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:336.

[156] Juwaynī, 2:124, tr. Boyle, 395; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:267; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 365.

[157] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:269.

[158] Juwaynī, 2:124, tr. Boyle, 360. [159] *LS*, 30/358.

[160] *Ibid.*; Juwaynī, 1:48, 2:93, tr. Boyle, 64, 361; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:336; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96–7.

his achievement, but it is hard to determine whether this expression refers to the battle with Tayangu[161] or to a later engagement as well: Jūzjānī alone credited Muḥammad with a decisive third victory over the Qara Khitai that took place simultaneously with Güchülüg's seizing of the Gürkhan, in which, allegedly with the help of 400,000 men, he had captured "all of the Khitans."[162] According to Ibn al-Athīr, Muḥammad arrived at the battlefield and, after finding out that Güchülüg had the upper hand, joined his side, killing, plundering and capturing the Qara Khitai, while a certain part of their army moved into his service.[163] But whatever role Muḥammad had played in Güchülüg's victory, Güchülüg was the one who captured the Gürkhan. The practical and symbolic significance of such an act is manifested by the details of Juwaynī's alleged deal between Muḥammad and Güchülüg, whether it took place or not.[164]

## The reign of Güchülüg

The question of whether by capturing Zhilugu Güchülüg intended to annihilate the Qara Khitai or only to usurp the throne was recently raised by Sinor.[165] I agree with his view that Güchülüg did not intend to eliminate Qara Khitan rule. Rather, he hoped to benefit from the remnants of the Gürkhan's prestige while keeping the real power in his own hands,[166] thereby becoming the new leader of the Qara Khitai empire. This is borne out by Güchülüg's behavior: he adopted Qara Khitan clothes, religion and customs. He assumed for himself Zhilugu's titles, conferring the honorific titles of "emperor emeritus" (*taishang huang*) and empress dowager on Zhilugu and his wife and waiting upon them like a filial son at least till Zhilugu's death in 1213. Outwardly he even let Zhilugu enjoy a certain amount of authority.[167] Another expression of Güchülüg's efforts to achieve legitimacy was marrying his son to a Qara Khitan princess.[168] Yet at least in the long run Güchülüg's efforts were not successful. The *Liao shi* explicitly says: "When Zhilugu died, Liao ceased to exist."[169] The same point of view is shared by Juwaynī, by far the most knowledgeable Muslim source on the Qara Khitai, and by many other Muslim and Chinese writers.[170] The historians' verdict, therefore, is that Güchülüg did

[161] So in Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:336, who however placed this battle after Güchülüg's defeat in Balāsāghūn. Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle 64 and Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44 only mention Muḥammad's victories in general.
[162] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307–8, 2:96. [163] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:270.
[164] See n. 150; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 166b.
[165] Sinor, "Western Information," 262; Sinor, "The Kitan," 241. [166] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 43–4.
[167] *LS*, 30/358; Juwaynī, 2:93, tr. Boyle, 361; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:337; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 43–4.
[168] Huang Jin, *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji*, *SBCG* ed., 28/12a–13a; WF, 654. [169] *LS*, 30/358.
[170] Juwaynī, 2:93, tr. Boyle, 361; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96, 108; Ghaffārī, *Jahān ārā*, 167; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 175a; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 48 (where Sultan Muḥammad clearly distinguishes between the Gürkhan, Güchülüg and the Mongols as three [not two] different entities). Although Güchülüg seized Zhilugu's rank, which probably means he assumed the titles of emperor and Gürkhan, he was never called by either title by any source available to me; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 240; Abū Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:110; Li Zhichang, *Travels of an Alchemist* (London, 1931), 89; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 553; Ibn al-Athīr, though distinguishing Güchülüg as a Tatar king, and designating his battle against



annihilate the Qara Khitai dynasty. This verdict reflects Güchülüg's non-Khitan ethnic origin; his internal policies, which were radically different from those of the Gürkhans; and his quick annihilation by the Mongols, which also brought the complete end of the Qara Khitai empire.

Before the Mongols attacked him, however, Güchülüg tried to revive the fortunes of the Qara Khitai empire. Luckily for him, Chinggis Khan was preoccupied from autumn 1211 with his campaign against the Jin,[171] while Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh was busy quelling the rebellion of Samarqand at least till 1212–13.[172] Güchülüg could therefore direct his attention towards the Qara Khitan vassals in the east. Unlike the Qara Khitai, however, he was indifferent to the needs and well-being of his sedentary subjects[173] and was therefore very unpopular among them. Güchülüg first tried to assert his authority in Almaliq. Almaliq was at that time ruled by Ozar (or Bozar), a Qarluq outlaw from Quyas who took advantage of the upheavals in the Qara Khitai empire and of the absence of the Qarluq Arslan Khan, who in 1211 had deserted to Chinggis Khan, to seize the city and its environs. Gathering the local ruffians around him, he crowned himself as Ozar Khan. Güchülüg attacked him several times with no success, but the assaults convinced Ozar Khan to turn to the Mongols, by whom he was favorably received. Even after Arslan Khan returned to Almaliq and killed Ozar, Güchülüg was unable to take the city.[174]

Güchülüg was more successful in enforcing his authority over the Tarim basin. Even before seizing the Gürkhan, Güchülüg released the eastern Qarakhanid prince who had been detained in Balāsāghūn since the rebellion of Kashgar around 1204. Yet Muḥammad son of Yūsuf, the last of the eastern Qarakhanids, never managed to rule Kashgar. The city's notables rebelled against him and in summer 1211 they killed him at the city's gates or in its royal dome. The enraged Güchülüg tried to subjugate Kashgar, and when its citizens refused to surrender he sent his troops to plunder and burn its harvest. After a few years of such treatment, probably around 1214, Kashgar surrendered, vanquished by hunger. Güchülüg then killed many of the local notables, and quartered his army in the city, each soldier being billeted on a local household, which was required to sustain him.[175] This enforced proximity between Kashgar's Muslim population and Güchülüg's non-Muslim troops was sure to create tensions even without Güchülüg's religious policy. Again in sharp

the Gürkhan as "the battle that annihilated the *Khitā*," included in his report on the end of the Qara Khitai (12:270–1) the events till the extermination of Güchülüg by the Mongols. Cf. *Majma' al-ansāb*, 230 where the end of the Qara Khitai is identical to Güchülüg's capture by the Mongols. The *Yuan shi* describes Chinggis Khan's campaign against Güchülüg as directed against the Western Liao (*YS*, 153/3609); the remnants of the Khitans (*YS*, 149/3522); Güchülüg's state (*YS*, 120/2964) or the Naiman (*YS*, 120/2969).
[171] On Chinggis Khan's campaign against the Jin see, e.g., Allsen, "The Rise," 357–60; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 105–18; Zhu Yaoting, *Chengjisihan*, 276–326.
[172] Juwaynī, 1:122–6, tr. Boyle, 392–6; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:267–8.
[173] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:337, and see the descriptions below.
[174] Juwaynī, 1:48, 57, tr. Boyle, 65, 75–6; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135.
[175] Juwaynī, 1:48–9, tr. Boyle, 65; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:337; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 133 (he dated Muḥammad's death to 607 [which ended in June 1211]).

contrast to the tolerant attitude of the Qara Khitai, Güchülüg, a former Christian who was later convinced by his Qara Khitan wife to adopt Buddhism, imposed a peculiar anti-Islamic policy. His subjects were given the rather curious choice of either adopting Christianity or Buddhism, or donning Khitan clothes, and any public manifestation of the Islamic creed was prohibited. Güchülüg's religious policy is by far the most famous aspect of his short rule, yet it should be taken with a grain of salt.[176]

The sources' grievances about the Muslims' fate under Güchülüg should not conceal the fact that he subdued the Tarim basin, and probably also other territories. Güchülüg's growing power at this stage can be determined by examining the conduct of Sultan Muḥammad (who, oddly enough, was not aware of Güchülüg's religious policy). Soon after Güchülüg seized the Gürkhan, Muḥammad sent him his emissaries, asking for a reward for his part in Güchülüg's victory. He asked Güchülüg to send him the Gürkhan, together with the princess who had been promised as his wife and significant parts of the Gürkhan's treasury, threatening otherwise to attack Güchülüg.[177] Muḥammad's demand, and its rejection by Güchülüg, proved how prestigious it was considered to vanquish the Gürkhan. Whether or not Güchülüg was impressed by the Gürkhan's begging to be saved the ultimate humiliation of being sent to Muḥammad[178] – if this ever took place – the Gürkhan still played much too important a part in Güchülüg's legitimization to be sent abroad. Not wanting to become involved in a dispute with Muḥammad, however, Güchülüg first offered him some precious gifts, creating the impression that he would send him the Gürkhan. Yet he delayed the actual delivery, until Muḥammad understood he was actually refusing his request (or until the Gürkhan's death).[179] Muḥammad then adopted an aggressive tone, threatening to crush Güchülüg's forces. Finding out about the latter's real power, however, he was obliged to limit himself to raids, which reached at least up to Kashgar.[180] Güchülüg allegedly protested against his behavior, claiming that it was suited for robbers, not for kings, and offered to solve their rivalry by direct combat. The fear inspired in Muḥammad by the idea of such a face-to-face encounter was so great that he took the extreme step of evacuating the region of the upper Jaxartes and demolishing the settlements there, including the towns of Shāsh, Isfījāb, Kāsān and possibly more. The final annihilation of the Farghāna Qarakhanids (in 1212–13) might have been part of this campaign.[181] Unable to secure this region from Güchülüg,[182] Muḥammad tried to form a buffer zone between his empire and Güchülüg's. He was not successful, however, since around 1217–18 Güchülüg ruled at least in Kāsān.[183] This advancement might have been the incentive for

[176] Juwaynī, 1:49, 53, tr. Boyle, 65, 70; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338; see the detailed discussion on pp. 194–6.
[177] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:271.
[178] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44.
[179] *Ibid.* See also Ibn al-Athīr, 12:271; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:226.
[180] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:271; Juwaynī, 2:125, tr. Boyle, 396.
[181] B. D. Kochnev, "La chronologie et la généalogie des Karakhanides du point de vue de la numismatique," *Cahiers d'Asia Centrale* 9 (2001), 66.
[182] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:271; Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 537, 558.
[183] *YS*, 124/3046.



Muḥammad's preparations for a full-scale campaign against Güchülüg on the eve of the latter's seizure by the Mongols.[184] The Muslims might have called Chinggis Khan's forces for help,[185] and the Qarluqs of Almaliq certainly complained to their overlord about Güchülüg's behavior.[186] Chinggis Khan, however, had his own reasons for confronting Güchülüg, who by gathering around him Mongol rivals, and by adding to that the prestige of the Gürkhan, endangered Chinggis Khan's hegemony over the Mongols.[187] Therefore, in 1216, soon after he had concluded his war against the Jin, Chinggis Khan sent his famous general Jebe to pursue Güchülüg.[188] The Mongol army, accompanied by an Uighur force, proceeded first to its Qarluq allies in Almaliq.[189] From there they continued to Balāsāghūn, in the vicinity of which they defeated a Qara Khitai force of 30,000 men.[190] Around this time the Mongols also received the submission of Ismāʿīl (Yisimaili), the Qara Khitai *basqaq* (commissioner) of Kāsān, who brought with him the rulers of several nearby cities. Ismāʿīl was appointed the leader of Jebe's vanguard.[191] Under his guidance the Mongols went to Kashgar, where Güchülüg was staying at this stage, but hearing of their approach he hastily escaped southward.[192] According to Muslim sources, upon entering Kashgar Jebe proclaimed that every person could adhere to his own religion, thereby gaining the population's support. The Kashgarians then turned against Güchülüg's soldiers who were quartered in their homes and killed them, facilitating Jebe's work.[193] The Mongols did not harm Kashgar, or any other Qara Khitai territory, but continued to pursue Güchülüg. He escaped in a southwestern direction, and was captured only in 1218, after he had lost his way in the Badakhshān region, near the valley of the Sarigh Chopan, probably on the border between Badakhshān and the Wakhan area, where the Mongols killed him.[194] According to the *Yuan shi*, however, the cities of the Tarim basin (Kashgar, Khotan and Yarkand) surrendered only after Güchülüg's head was displayed in his

[184] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 46; Juwaynī, 2:101, tr. Boyle, 369.
[185] Juwaynī, 1:49–50, 55, tr. Boyle, 66, 73; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338.
[186] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135.
[187] Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 99, 102; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 46; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 119.
[188] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 46; Tu Ji, *Mengwuer*, 29/5a; cf. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 119. Juwaynī, 2:100, tr. Boyle, 368 and Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:108–9 connected the campaign against Güchülüg to Chinggis Khan's conflict with Sultan Muḥammad, thereby placing it at a later date.
[189] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135.
[190] *YS*, 149/3521. Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 102 and Plano Carpini (in C. Dawson [ed.], *The Mongol Mission* [New York, 1955], 60) also describe a battle between the Mongol army and Naiman and Qara Khitai forces.
[191] *YS*, 120/2969, translated in E. Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 35.
[192] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135; Juwaynī, 1:50, tr. Boyle, 66; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338. Only according to Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 102, did Güchülüg actually fight with Jebe, and escaped only after he was defeated and his wives and children were taken captive.
[193] Juwaynī, 1:50, tr. Boyle, 67–8; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338. See pp. 194–6.
[194] *Ibid.*; *SH*, 237/172. For the location of Güchülüg's capture see Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 67–8, n. 18; Ḥaydar Dughlat, *Ta'rikh-i Rashīdī: History of the Moghuls in Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), 2:186 n. 1; Yao Dali, "Quchulu baiwang didian kao," *Yuanshi ji beifang minzu shi yanjiu jikan* 5 (1981), 70–8; *SHdR*, 2:844–5; cf. Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:108.

realm.[195] In any case, in 1218 Güchülüg's territories fell to the Mongols. Seizing Transoxania and Khurāsān in 1219–20, the Mongols completed the subjugation of all the land that had once formed the Qara Khitai empire.

The gradual decline in Qara Khitan power was apparent throughout Zhilugu's reign. It showed clearly that the new Gürkhan had failed to find suitable solutions for the problems that he had faced upon his enthronement. Güchülüg's usurpation is the best example of the Gürkhan's weakness vis-à-vis his central administration, but even before Güchülüg we find ministers manipulating the Gürkhan – such as Shamur Tayangu, who managed to preserve the Qarluq ruling house in Qayaliq around 1204, contrary to the Gürkhan's original intention,[196] and Maḥmūd Tai, whose concern for his personal wealth brought about the alienation of the Gürkhan from his soldiers, thereby sealing his fate.[197]

The weakness of the central power was manifested in the indecisive response of the Qara Khitai to serious blows to their authority, such as Tekish's killing of their tribute emissaries before 1177; the capture of Balkh by the Ghūrids in 1198; and Muḥammad's takeover of Balkh and Bukhara in the early thirteenth century. In each case the Qara Khitai did react, but they did not do their utmost to defend their interests, thereby exposing their vulnerability.[198]

Another front on which Zhilugu failed was that of his regional commissioners. Their arrogant behavior and oppressive demands were evident throughout the empire, and stood in sharp contrast to the reputation for justice the Qara Khitai had originally acquired.[199] Naturally, it encouraged the vassals to look for new lords. Moreover, the ample wealth that the local commissioners accumulated, at least in Bukhara and Gaochang,[200] strongly suggests that not all the property they were supposed to deliver to the Gürkhan's treasury indeed ended up there.

The huge accumulation of wealth by both regional and central officials implies that the Gürkhan must have been facing certain financial problems. These could easily become critical, since the Gürkhan's army was salaried.[201] One of the ways in which the Gürkhan would refill his treasury and keep his troops occupied was to lend troops to his vassals in return for money or spoils: in 1172 Tekish was accused of having emptied his treasury to buy Qara Khitai support for his struggle with his brother, and after his coronation he did send the Qara Khitai troops back with enormous wealth.[202] After their conflict with Tekish, Sulṭān Shāh did not have to pay the Qara Khitai, who offered to support him, but when he wanted their help in Khurāsān he had to guarantee an appropriate compensation.[203] The son of Közli, a Ghūrid rebel against Khwārazm in the early thirteenth century who intended to ask

[195] *YS*, 120/2969.
[196] Juwaynī, 1:56–7, tr. Boyle, 74–5. [197] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360.
[198] On Tekish's behavior see ch. 2. On the other events see above.
[199] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; Juwaynī, 2:90, tr. Boyle, 358; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22.
[200] *SWQZL*, 60a; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68–9; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257–8.
[201] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360. See pp. 148–9.
[202] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:303; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 51; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 137.
[203] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:380; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:268. See p. 61 above.



for the Gürkhan's help against Muḥammad, started by pillaging his father's treasury, presumably to be able to pay the Qara Khitai.[204] It is probably in this light that the Gürkhan's demand that Tekish compensate him for his soldiers who were killed in the battles with the Ghūrids in 1198[205] should be seen. Financial considerations probably also determined the main direction of Qara Khitai military involvement in this period, i.e., mostly in the west, since it was much more profitable to fight in the rich regions of Khurāsān, Khwārazm or Transoxania than to assist one Mongol tribe against another.

Plagued by problems of authority and money, the Qara Khitai played no significant role in Mongol unification. Allying the Mongol tribes against the Jin was far too great a task for the declining Qara Khitai empire. The growing power of the Mongols therefore put a definite end to the already rather hesitant efforts of the Qara Khitai to return to the original Liao territories. Moreover, while the Qara Khitai could militarily handle the Khwārazm Shāh, the additional threat of the Mongols proved too much for them. Even before the Mongols became a direct menace, the repercussions of Chinggis Khan's activities severely harmed the Western Liao empire. Not only did it lose some of its vassals to the Mongols, but the influx of large numbers of nomads into its realm shifted the delicate balance between the nomads and the sedentary population in the Qara Khitan empire. Under these new circumstances the Gürkhan found it harder to retain his authority over his troops, finding himself in a situation rather similar to the one which, nearly a hundred years before, had paved the way for the rise of the Qara Khitai.[206]

Despite all that, even in its final stages the Qara Khitai empire still enjoyed a certain amount of prestige among Mongols and Turks, Muslims and non-Muslims: Güchülüg was certainly aware of the Gürkhan's special position among his Turkic subjects.[207] Muḥammad aspired to add the Gürkhan to his host of vanquished hostages,[208] and both Muḥammad and 'Uthmān yearned to get a Qara Khitai princess in marriage.[209] Moreover, when Jebe killed Güchülüg and seized his lands, Chinggis Khan was afraid that his loyal commander would revolt against him due to the enormous power he had accumulated through this conquest.[210] The most impressive manifestation of Qara Khitai prestige is their image in the Muslim literature as a mighty wall or dam that, until Sultan Muḥammad carelessly opened it, kept the Mongols away from the Islamic lands.[211]

The weak Qara Khitai empire under Güchülüg could not have stopped the Mongols. But the difference between the relatively benign rule of the Qara Khitai (at least until Zhilugu's reign) and the enormous destruction wrought by the Mongols in Transoxania was at least partly responsible for the relatively positive

[204] Juwaynī, 2:72, tr. Boyle, 339. [205] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:135–7.
[206] For a broader discussion of nomad–sedentary relations under the Qara Khitai see pp. 139–43.
[207] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 43. [208] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44.
[209] *Ibid.*; Juwaynī, 2:122–3, tr. Boyle, 393. [210] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:157–8; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 403.
[211] Juwaynī, 2:79–80, 89, tr. Boyle, 347, 358; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:302; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 139, 230; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:330; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71; Ibn Abī Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* (Paris, 1995), 23.

image of the Qara Khitai in the Muslim literature. Indeed, the difference between the Gürkhan's policy and that of Güchülüg is no less striking. A pure nomad, Güchülüg understood the importance of trappings such as clothes and titles for his legitimacy, but was completely inattentive to the needs of the sedentary population, pillaging and ruining his own territories. His actions shifted the nomad–sedentary balance in the Qara Khitai empire even further in favor of the nomads. It gained him certain military successes but exacerbated the empire's financial problems and alienated his sedentary subjects from him. Due to their origin in the mixed environment of the Liao, the Qara Khitai had combined nomadic military force with a sensitivity to the well-being of the sedentary population. Under a strong leader like Dashi this dual attitude resulted in a strong empire. Under Zhilugu, attacked from both sides and plagued by internal problems, it was certainly not enough for coping with the Mongols.

## Epilogue: what became of the Qara Khitai?

Drawn into the Mongol turmoil, the Qara Khitai went through a process that was common also to other steppe peoples: They were dispersed, lost their identity as an ethnic group and were reduced to clan or tribal units in the new collectives established in post-Mongol Eurasia.[212] In the next few pages I present a preliminary sketch of the fate of the Qara Khitai after the dissolution of their empire.

The disintegration of the Qara Khitai empire had begun by 1210 when the Khwārazm Shāh Muḥammad conquered Transoxania. Many Qara Khitai were killed in these battles, a fact that caused several Muslim writers to describe the Qara Khitai as disappearing from that date.[213] After the 1210 battle, or perhaps earlier, several Qara Khitai were captured and sold as mamluks. Some of those mamluks can be traced to the Delhi sultanate, where they filled important posts.[214] Most of the survivors, however, estimated at 70,000 men, were incorporated in the Khwārazmian army, where they retained their separate units.[215] When the Khwārazmian army reached Iraq in 1218, the 'Abbāsid Caliph tried to ally with the Qara Khitai in the Khwārazmian army. Sending them horses and money, he offered to acknowledge their sovereignty over parts of the Khwārazmian territories if they killed Muḥammad. The Khwārazm Shāh intercepted some of the Caliph's letters and presents to the Qara Khitai, and this contributed to his decision to

[212] T. T. Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters: The Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 1 (1997), 16–18; Golden, *Introduction*, 304–6, 317–18; P. B. Golden, "'I Will Give the People Unto Thee': The Chinggisid Conquests and their Aftermath in the Turkic World," *JRAS* 3, 10 (2000), 34–5.

[213] Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:110; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:270.

[214] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:9, 13, 19, 22, 28.

[215] Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:593; whence Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 109–10; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:14, 19; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:231; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 7:189; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākihat al-khulafā' wa-mufākahat al-ẓurafā* (Bonn, 1832), 237; also Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:275.



withdraw from Iraq.[216] He did not, however, punish the Qara Khitai, probably because he needed their help in his confrontation with the Mongols.

The Qara Khitai's later attempt to assassinate the Khwārazm Shāh seems to have been connected more with the coming of the Mongols than with the Caliph's initiative. Although the Qara Khitai had fought the Mongols in Bukhara,[217] after the Mongols conquered Transoxania and the Khwārazm Shāh proved incapable of stopping them, the Qara Khitai were less enthusiastic about fighting for him. In 1220, when the Khwārazm Shāh was in Balkh, most of his army, which was supposed to oppose the Mongols, consisted of Qara Khitai units. Those units planned to capture him and present his head to Chinggis Khan, thereby gaining their freedom. One of the Qara Khitai, however, warned Muḥammad in time and he managed to escape.[218] Even without his head, the Qara Khitai in the Khwārazmian army turned to the Mongols and were incorporated into their troops,[219] although it is quite hard to determine at which stage of the Mongol invasion this took place.

Incorporation into the Mongol army was also the fate of the Qara Khitai who remained with Güchülüg. Even before Güchülüg's capture, a segment of the Qara Khitai troops or of their auxiliary forces was fighting with the Mongols against him.[220] Like the Khwārazm Shāh, Güchülüg did not try to confront the Mongols, but escaped westwards, and most of his army, Naiman and Qara Khitai, seems to have been incorporated into the Mongol army without much problem.[221] At least some of those forces, as well as most of the troops of the Qara Khitai's former eastern vassals (the Uighurs, the Qarluqs and the remnants of the Eastern Qarakhanids) formed part of the Mongol force that attacked the Khwārazm Shāh in 1220.[222]

Another segment of the Qara Khitai, which also became a vassal of the Mongols but on different terms, was the Qara Khitai of Kirmān (1222/3–1306), a dynasty established by a scion of the Gürkhan's family, Baraq Ḥājib (d. 1235). Baraq and his brother, Ḥamīd Pur, were originally sent to Khwārazm to collect its taxes in the early thirteenth century, or before. They were either detained by the Khwārazm Shāh from then on, or, more likely, captured after the battle with Tayangu in 1210.[223] Impressed by their talents, after 1210 the Khwārazm Shāh gave the two brothers important posts: Ḥamīd Pur was appointed commander in the Khwārazmian army

[216] Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:599–600; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:327–8, 334–5.

[217] Qazwīnī, *Guzīda*, 520; Juwaynī, 1:80, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 103, 476.

[218] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:275; cf. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:599–600, whence Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:327, 334–5. According to *Mir'āt al-zamān*, the Qara Khitai eventually reached the place of Khwārazm Shāh's tomb, exhumed and decapitated him.

[219] Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:609; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:326, 335.

[220] *YS*, 120/2969. This was in addition to the Uighur troops who also took part in the Mongol force: *YS*, 122/3000; Yu Ji, *Daoyuan xue gu lu* (Shanghai, 1937), 24/403.

[221] See the careers of Naiman and Qara Khitai in the Mongol army, Kadyrbaev, *Ocherki istorii*, 110; Rashīd al-Dīn, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (London, 1971), 315.

[222] *YS*, 120/2969–70; Juwaynī, 1:63, tr. Boyle, 82.

[223] There are several different versions of the early history of Baraq and his brother. See, e.g., Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā li'l ḥaḍra al-'ulyā* (Tehran, 1949), 22; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 174; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 195; Qazwīnī, *Guzīda*, 518–20; Juwaynī, 2:211 ff., tr. Boyle, 476 ff.

(and was later killed fighting against the Mongols), while Baraq became a chamberlain.[224] Baraq was later attached to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Muḥammad's son who was appointed over Persian Iraq, and served as his governor of Iṣfahān. Ghiyāth al-Dīn either appointed him governor of the province of Kirmān also[225] or, after a quarrel with Ghiyāth al-Dīn's vizier, Baraq received his permission to go to the Delhi sultanate.[226] Passing through Kirmān on his way, he was attacked by the local governor, defeated him and replaced him, renouncing the idea of proceeding to India.[227] Jalāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad's successor, confirmed his appointment in 1224. Two years later he came to deal with Baraq's rebellion, but left without confronting him.[228] In 1228 Ghiyāth al-Dīn arrived at Kirmān as a refugee, after having fought with his brother. Baraq humiliated him and finally put him to death. Estranging himself from Khwārazm, Baraq, who converted to Islam shortly before going to Kirmān, asked the Caliph for investiture, and the latter conferred upon him the title Qutlugh Sultan.[229] The legitimization of the dynasty was hence Muslim and Persian, as attested both by the appellation Khusrānī (Khusraw-like) associated with Baraq and by the Persian language used for recording the history of the dynasty.[230] Yet throughout its rule the Kirmānid dynasty continued to be known as the Qara Khitai, probably due to the prestige the name still had in the eastern Islamic world and among Kirmān's new overlords, the Mongols.

Baraq submitted to the Mongols either soon after his investiture by the 'Abbāsids or later, after the Mongol commanders had reached Sistān in 1232, and he sent his son to the Mongol court.[231] Chinggis Khan (d. 1227), or his successor, Ögödei (r. 1229–41), conferred upon Baraq the title Qutlugh Khan, also borne by his successors[232] (or confirmed the title originally given to him by Ghiyāth al-Dīn).[233] The Qara Khitai of Kirmān remained vassals of the Mongol Great Khans, and later of the Ilkhans, until the end of their rule. They had matrimonial relations with the Ilkhans, as well as with the Chaghadaid Mongols and with the neighboring dynasties of Yazd, Luristān and Fāris.[234] A characteristic feature of their dynasty was the politically prominent role of women, two out of their nine rulers being queens, including the celebrated Qutlugh Terken (r. 1257–82).[235] In 1306 the Ilkhan Öljeitü deposed the last of the Qara Khitai of Kirmān, who had neglected to pay his dues to the Mongol treasury, and appointed a simple governor over the province. The last of the Qutlughkhanids, Quṭb al-Dīn II (r. 1306–7), escaped to Shīrāz, to his father's wife. In 1328 his daughter, Qutlugh Khan, became the wife of Mubārriz al-Dīn Muḥammad, the founder of the Muẓaffarid dynasty (1314–93).

[224] Juwaynī, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 476; cf. Nasawī, *Sīra*, 174. [225] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 72.
[226] Juwaynī, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 476; Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22. [227] *Ibid.*
[228] Juwaynī, 2:213–14, tr. Boyle, 478–9. [229] Juwaynī, 2:214, tr. Boyle, 479.
[230] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22. Khusraw was a famous Sassanid king, whose name became a symbol for the just Persian Muslim ruler.
[231] Juwaynī, 2:214, tr. Boyle, 479; Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh-i Mu'īnī* (Tehran, 1957), 22.
[232] Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, 22. [233] Juwaynī, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 476.
[234] V. Minorsky, "Ḳutlugh Khānids," *EI2* 5 (1986), 554; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 195 ff.; Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, 22; A. K. S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia* (London, 1988), 276–87.
[235] See p. 167.



In 1340, when Mubārriz al-Dīn took Kirmān, his historian described the event as the reestablishment of the Qara Khitai court,[236] and even as late as 1375 Mubārriz al-Dīn legitimized his conquest of Luristān by the kinship between his Qara Khitan wife and the Atabegs of Yazd.[237] Yet individuals identified as Qara Khitai are extremely rare in the Muẓaffarid chronicles, and Quthlugh Khan's sons, who became the Muẓaffarid rulers, are never designated that way. With the dissolution of the Kirmānid dynasty by Öljeitü, the Qara Khitai, therefore, ceased to exist as a political entity.[238]

Moreover, in the fourteenth century the Qara Khitai (as well as the Khitans in general), not only in Kirmān but also elsewhere, began to lose their ethnic identity. It is possible to locate individual Qara Khitans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under the Mongols, although the confusion of the terms Khitai and Qara Khitai in the different sources complicates this task;[239] yet it is clear that in the long run the Qara Khitai were absorbed by the Turks, Iranians and Mongols. Rashīd al-Dīn beautifully portrays the beginning of this process when he says: "Now [presumably the early fourteenth century] it has come about that the people of Khitai, Jurchen, Nankiyas [i.e., south China], Uighur, Qipchaq, Turkmen, Qarluq, Qalaj, and all the prisoners and the Tajik races that have been brought up among the Mongols are also called Mongols. All that assemblage takes pride in calling itself Mongol."[240] The trend of assimilation with the Mongols was enhanced by the disintegration of the political framework of the Qara Khitai empire even before the Mongol conquest and by the Mongols' unprecedented military successes. Moreover, the crumbling of China before the Mongols probably contributed to the Qara Khitai tendency to emphasize the nomadic component of their identity, thereby stressing their affinities with the nomadic Turks and Mongols.

A more practical reason for the assimilation of the Qara Khitai was the Mongol policy of dividing their subject peoples' troops among different Mongol units, which were sent to fight all over Eurasia.[241] The occurrence of toponyms and clan names in which the name Khitai (Khatai) appears reveals the widespread dispersion of the Qara Khitai and Khitans all over Eurasia. Toponyms including the name Khitai apear in the fourteenth century in the region of the lower Don, near the Caspian sea; in the sixteenth century in the Ob region in western Siberia; in modern Bashkiria, on both sides of the Ural mountains; and in the steppes of southern Moldavia, formerly inhabited by the Qipchaq tribes, where there is even a place called Qara Khitai.[242] Two villages in modern Tajikistan, called Khitoi and Khitoi reza, are also described as originating in the Qara Khitai period.[243] Clans and

[236] Kutubī, *Tarīkh-i āl-i Muẓaffar* (Tehran, 1968), 42. [237] Kutubī, *Tarīkh*, 72.
[238] Minorsky, "Ḳutlugh Khānids," 554; see also Wang Zhilai, "Guanyu 'Hou Xi Liao,'" *Xinjiang shehui kexue* 1983/1, 91–2.
[239] See pp. 143–6 for several examples and their problematic character.
[240] Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 163–4; Rashīd, *Compendium*, 1:44. The "Khitai" probably refers to the Qara Khitai as well.
[241] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 16–18. [242] Sinor, "Western Information," 264–7.
[243] B. I. Bushkov, "Formirovanie sovremennoj ethnicheskoj situatsii v severnom Tadzhikistane," *Sovietskaya Etnografiia* 2 (1990), 34.

tribes called Qara Khitai, Khitai or Khatai appear among the seventeenth-century Afghans, whose ancestors are said to had have come from the region of Khiṭāi and Khotan,[244] among the Bashkirs, the Crimean Tatars, Qara Qalpaqs, Nogais, Qazaqs and Uzbeks, as well as among the modern Qyrghyz who live in the region of the Qara Khitai central territory.[245]

The name Qara Khitai remained connected to the central territory of the Qara Khitai at least until the sixteenth century,[246] and even in 1811 there is evidence that the people of the Ili were still called Qara Khitai.[247] Traditions about the Qara Khitai empire continued to circulate at least until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when they found expression in *Majmū' al-tawārīkh* and *Ta'rīkh-i Ḥaydarī*.[248] It is unclear, however, to what extent, if at all, the modern Khitai clans retain the memory of the historical Qara Khitai. Certainly, the non-Islamization of the Qara Khitai and their connection to China make them less attractive as a focus of identification in the independent Muslim Central Asian republics and in the mostly Muslim Xinjiang.

[244] Ni'matallāh Harawī *Ta'rīkh-i khān jahān* (Dacca, 1962), 2:649–50.
[245] *ZK*, 112–13; Sinor, "Western Information," 264–7.
[246] Haydar Dughlāt, *Ta'rīkh-i Rashīdī*, 2:188. [247] *ZK*, 112.
[248] Akhsīkandī, "Majmū'," fol. 28b ff.; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 242 ff.

PART II

# Aspects of cultural and institutional history

CHAPTER 4

# China

## Introduction

Though firmly located in Central Asia, the Qara Khitai or Western Liao dynasty is considered by the *Liao shi* to be a legitimate Chinese dynasty, whose basic annals directly follow that of the proper Liao.[1] Contemporary Muslim authors, although usually referring to the Western Liao as Qara Khitai or just Khitā, often denote its rulers as "the Chinese."[2]

Indeed, literary and archaeological evidence reveals that throughout its rule the Western Liao retained several Chinese features such as reign titles and temple names for its emperors,[3] and Chinese honorary and administrative titles for its nobility and officials.[4] In the central territory of the Qara Khitai, Chinese administrative measures such as census taking and taxation on the basis of households, rather than individuals, are apparent,[5] and local rulers who submitted to the Qara Khitai received seals and tablets of authority, and had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Western Liao in certain rites.[6] The Chinese language was used on the Chinese-type coins of the dynasty.[7] Throughout its existence the Western Liao retained a unique Khitan dress that distinguished it from its Muslim subjects,[8] and – at least in the case of the emperor – this dress was made exclusively of Chinese silk.[9] The Qara Khitai used a Chinese calendar, but they did not enforce it on

[1] *LS*, 30/355–8. For Chinese dynastic histories and the hierarchy of its different sections (e.g., chronicles and biographies) see, e.g., Yang Lien-sheng, "Chinese Official Historiography," 44–59.

[2] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83, 84, 86, 310; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275; al-ʿAẓīmī, *Taʾrīkh Ḥalab* (Paris, 1939), 420; "Alfī," fol. 80b; see also Bar Hebraeus (a Christian), *Chronography*, 347, 351, 353, 354.

[3] *LS*, 30/357–8; *BSJ*, 5692. See table 1 in the appendices.

[4] E.g., *LS*, 30/357–8; YLCC-*ZR*, 8/171. Some Chinese titles are also recorded in the Muslim literature, e.g., *fuma* (imperial son-in-law) or *shawgam* (= *shaojian*, junior supervisor). WF, 665–6. See also tables 2 and 3 in the appendices.

[5] *LS*, 30/357; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84.

[6] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; *JS*, 121/2637–8; Juwaynī, 2:18, 75, tr. Boyle, 290, 342; "Alfī," fol. 198. See pp. 116–17. The details of these rites are not given in the sources.

[7] Wei Yuewang, "Liao qian tulu," *China Numismatics* 4 (1984), 69; WF, 673.

[8] Juwaynī, 1:49, 2:84, tr. Boyle, 65, 352.

[9] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86.

their subjects.[10] Architectural remains from the region of the Chu valley near the Western Liao capital such as the use of a *kang* for heating, construction with mud walls and the use of semi-circular tiles with floral designs can also be attributed to Chinese influences.[11]

In the manner of northern Chinese tradition, however, those symbols of "Chineseness" were by no means exclusive. The Western Liao emperor, for example, also bore the Inner Asian title Gürkhan, and Khitan, Turkic and Arabo-Persian titles coexisted with those of Chinese origin.[12] Moreover, Khitan, Uighur and Persian were used together with Chinese in writing.[13]

The first part of this chapter explains why Chinese features were retained outside China and among non-Chinese populations of the Western Liao. The second part, entitled "The administration as an example," reviews the governmental system of the Qara Khitai and its possible connections to Chinese modes and models. Through this discussion, I hope to evaluate which Chinese elements the Qara Khitai chose to adopt and how central those elements were for their empire. Most of the Chinese features mentioned above are of a superficial nature, a fact that derives in part from the limited sources available, but is nonetheless significant. The detailed study of Qara Khitai administration, essential in itself for understanding Qara Khitai history, will allow us to evaluate the depth of Chinese influence. Administration lends itself to this kind of analysis because Chinese bureaucratic methods were among the major borrowings of border dynasties in or near China.[14]

## Why were Chinese features retained?

Before suggesting several explanations for this phenomenon, a few preliminary remarks about the role of Chinese cultural elements among the Liao Khitans are in order. Recent research, drawing principally on the study of Liao art and archaeology, stresses the syncretism of Khitan tribal elements with assimilated Chinese features. The conclusion is that the Liao aristocracy, while retaining their ethnic characteristics such as language, script, and even nomadic way of life, fully adhered to Chinese imperial tradition, identifying themselves both at home and abroad as Chinese, and no less so than the Song.[15] Their transformed identity can be defined as Sino-Khitan, i.e. ethnic Khitan with elements of Chinese culture,

[10] *LS*, 30/353 ff. Adopting a Chinese calendar was traditionally one of China's requirements from its tributary states.

[11] Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 169–72; Bernshtam, *Chujskaia dolina*, 47–55; 139–42; Bernshtam, *Chujskogo kanala*, 25–6, 44; Viatkin et al. (eds.), *Istoriia Kirgizii*, 1:140–1.

[12] E.g., *tayangu* (chamberlain); Khan; vizier; *shiḥna*. See, e.g., Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 63, 75, 322, 344–5, 357, 359; see also table 3.

[13] See pp. 127–8 below.

[14] See, e.g., Dunnell, *White and High*, 9; F. W. Mote, *Imperial China 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 77.

[15] Tsao Hsingyuan, "Appropriation to Possession", *passim*; Feng Jiqin, *Qidan*, 246–62; L. Cooke Johnson, "The Wedding Ceremony for an Imperial Liao Princess: Wall Paintings from a Liao Dynasty Tomb in Jilin," *Artibus Asiae* 44 (1983), 107–36; also Ren Aijun, *Qidan shi shi jieyao* (Harbin, 2001), 264 ff. For earlier reference to this problem see, e.g., Yao Congwu, "Qidan Hanhua de fenxi," in Yao Congwu, *Liao shi lunwen*, in *Yao Congwu xiansheng quanji* (Taibei, 1972), 3:33–64. Cf. Mote, *Imperial China*, 86–91.



not very different from the designation Muslim Turk, a much less problematic conjuncture.[16]

Yelü Dashi, the founder of the Western Liao dynasty, was certainly a good example of such composite identity. A great rider and archer, he was also well versed in both Khitan and Chinese script, and in 1115 he even received the *jinshi* title. His Confucian learning was expressed in his futile attempts to convince the Song not to break their alliance with the Liao, but it was his military talent that allowed him both to overcome the Song and to recognize the futility of challenging the Jin.[17]

The Chinese elements retained by the Western Liao therefore reflect the retention of the Sino-Khitan elements of the Liao dynasty. The adoption of the title Gürkhan side by side with the designation of Chinese emperor attests that from the beginning the Chinese elements were less important in the ruling strata's identity than they were in the Liao period. Yet the maintenance of Chinese components in Khitan identity for nearly a hundred years after the dissolution of the Liao, in a non-Chinese environment and among a non-Chinese population, calls for a thorough investigation, especially when compared with the Mongols' quick loss of their Chinese heritage after controlling the whole of China for a hundred years.[18]

Part of the explanation is connected with the *raison d'être* of the Western Liao's very existence: to establish itself in a new environment, far from the Jurchen menace, in order to subsequently restore the Great Liao kingdom in its former domains.[19] Indeed, soon after his first successes in Central Asia, following his coronation in Emil in 1131/2 and the conquest of Balāsāghūn in 1134, Yelü Dashi, probably motivated by his homesick Khitan subjects, organized an allegedly grand campaign against the Jin. The campaign, one that Dashi prudently did not lead himself, came to naught, a fact that convinced the Khitans to devote their energies to Central Asia, where indeed they proved to be much more successful.[20] But while occupied in the west, the Western Liao did not neglect their connection to the east. They proudly refused to acknowledge the Jin's superiority in 1146 and there is evidence of their continued interest in the Jin border by sending scouts, spies or even a small-scale military force in 1136, 1156, 1177 and perhaps also 1185–6 and 1188–90.[21] Those actions testify that while acknowledging the futility of confronting the Jin, due to both severe logistical problems and the power of the Jurchens, the vision of restoring the Great Liao empire was still meaningful to the Western Liao elite at least in the first two generations.

[16] Here Islam is regarded more as a culture than merely as a religion; for differentiating Chinese ethnicity from Chinese culture see M. S. Abramson, "Deep Eyes and High Noses: Constructing Ethnicity in Tang China (618–907)," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2001, ch. 1.

[17] For more details on Yelü Dashi's early career see pp. 19–26.

[18] E. Endicott-West, "Aspects of Khitan Liao and Mongolian Yüan Imperial Rule: A Comparative Perspective," in G. Seaman and D. Marks (eds.), *Rulers from the Steppe* (Los Angeles, 1991), 215.

[19] *LS*, 30/356. [20] *LS*, 30/357; WF, 624; see p. 40 for details.

[21] *SC*, 178; WF, 643–4, 646, 647; see Chs. 1, 2 and 3 for full descriptions and references.

Another important motive for retaining the Chinese features was that they were thought to contribute to the legitimization of the Qara Khitai even in their new Central Asian home, and among their mainly Muslim subjects.

The population of the Qara Khitai empire was multi-ethnic and heterogeneous. Besides the Khitans, both those who followed Yelü Dashi in his journey westward and a group that had already arrived in Central Asia before them – who were a small minority in their empire – it was mainly composed of Turks, including Uighurs, Iranians, Mongols and a few Han Chinese. Most of the population was sedentary, though most of the Khitans, the Mongols and some Turkic tribes were nomads. No less important, most of this population, especially the Iranian and Turkic components in the Eastern and Western Qarakhanid realms, and in Khwārazm, as well as a large portion of the people in Western Liao central territory, were Muslims, a fact that linked them no less, and perhaps more, than did their ethnic identity.

The presence of Han Chinese in the Qara Khitai realm deserves a special mention. The sources certainly attest to the presence of certain Han Chinese in Western Liao ranks, e.g. the "Han fellow" (*han er*) who served as Yelü Dashi's emissary to the Tanguts in 1126, or Li Shichang, Zhilugu's assistant to the prime minister.[22] The mixed population in Yanjing and among Tianzuo's followers, from which Yelü Dashi's initial followers came (perhaps attested by his nomination of northern and southern officials soon after leaving Tianzuo), as well as in Kedun,[23] suggests that other Han Chinese were also present within the Western Liao realm. Ibn al-Athīr explicitly says that among Yelü Dashi's troops in Qatwān there were Chinese, Khitan and Turkic contingents, yet since he also calls the Khitans Chinese, it is unclear what he means by that.[24] The evidence of a more than sporadic presence of Han Chinese in the Western Liao realm derived from reports of Chinese travelers who visited Central Asia in the early 1220s (Chang Chun) or later, in 1259 (Chang De). The large number of Chinese farmers and artisans in Samarqand or the many Chinese living in Almaliq and Besh Baliq could therefore have been the result of a more recent Mongol transfer and not necessarily a continuation of the situation prevalent under the Western Liao.[25] It is therefore unlikely that the Chinese features were retained only in order to appeal to the Han Chinese population of the empire, which seems to have been quite marginal.

The Liao certainly enjoyed a certain prestige in Central Asia, a fact that must have contributed to Yelü Dashi's decision to go westward. He specifically referred to the Liao legacy in his address to the Uighurs in the early 1130s,[26] although

[22] Zhang Jun, *Zhang Weigong*, 10876/17; YLCC-*ZR*, 2/32, 7/153, 8/171.

[23] See ch. 1.

[24] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; see n. 1 and p. 148 for a more detailed discussion.

[25] *Chang Chun*, 1/40a; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 93; Liu Yu, *Xi shi ji* (reporting Chang De's journey) in *Wang Guowei yi shu* (Shanghai, 1983), 13:, tr. in Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:124, 127. For Mongol transfer policies see, e.g., Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters", 2–23; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Āthār al-aḥyā'* (Tehran, 1989), 145. I have, however, found no specific documentation of Chinese transferred into Central Asia between 1218 and the 1220s. Cf. *XLSYJ*, 181–3; Su Beihai, "Xi Liao wangchao tongzhi xia Hasake caoyuan jingji wenhua de fazhan," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao* (1986), 39–40.

[26] *LS*, 30/356.



military means were also used in his relations with them. The Liao won the respect of nomadic Mongol and Turkic tribes and also of the Qarakhanids with whom it sustained commercial relations and, in the early to mid-eleventh century, even maintained matrimonial relations.[27] Yet at least in Muslim Central Asia it was the general image of China, and not the specific notion of the Liao, that proved to be more important for the Qara Khitai's legitimization.

What was the meaning of China in pre-Mongol Muslim Central Asia? In the Islamic world as a whole, China (Arabic: Ṣīn; Persian: Chīn) was conceived as a vast, populous, remote and mysterious country on the eastern fringes of the world, whose emperor was considered one of the five great kings of the world (together with the rulers of India, Byzantium, the Arabs and the Turks). The Chinese were known as idol worshipers, but had a reputation of tolerance towards other religions and justice in general. The peculiarity of the Chinese script was recognized by the Muslims, who thought that it was known to all the citizens of China. Above all, China was seen as a highly civilized country, famous mostly for its superb artisans. Indeed, most of the information about China in the Muslim sources is of a practical commercial character, i.e., describing Chinese merchandise, most famous among which was of course silk, and the distance between one Chinese city to another, either by sea or land.[28] This image, mainly reflected in Muslim classical geographical literature of the ninth–tenth centuries, was based on (mostly indirect) acquaintance with Tang China (618–906).[29] This same image was, however, reproduced in many later Muslim works of the tenth–twelfth centuries, including those written in Central Asia,[30] and their anachronistic character is apparent, for example, by the fact that Changan (Ḫumdān), Tang China's capital, was still described as such long after it had lost this position.[31] Apart from this general image, a few authors of the late eleventh–early twelfth centuries displayed

[27] Marwazī/Minorsky, 7–9, tr. 19–21; Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-mulūk* (Tehran, 1962), 190 ff.; tr. F. Barke as *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings* (London, 1960), p. 153 ff.; Wei Liangtao, "Halahan wangchao, 212–23."

[28] A. Miquel, "L'Inde et la Chine vues du côte de l'Islam", in B. Lewis and E. Leites (eds.), *As Others See us: Mutual Perceptions, East and West* (New York, 1985), 284–301.

[29] The geographers did not reach China, but their descriptions are partially based on first-hand reports of merchants and diplomats who reached China, the most famous being the merchants Sulaymān (851) and Abū Zayd (916). For more details see, e.g., A. Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'à milieu du 11ème siècle* (Paris, 1975), 1:116–26; D. D. Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China* (Canberra, 1986), 25–7.

[30] Miquel, "L'Inde," 286; Leslie, *Islam*, 58, and see, e.g., Anonymous, *Ḥudūd al-'ālam* (Tehran, 1961), 82–86; Gardīzī, *Zayn al-akhbār* (Tehran, 1968), 268–71; Ibn Ḫamdūn, *al-Tadhkira al-Ḥamdūniyya* (Beirut, 1996), 3:213, 7:405, 9:218; al-Gharnaṭī, *Tuḥfat al-albāb*, ed. G. Ferrand, *JA* 207 (1925), 48, 49, 106–9, 200, 211, 214; Ibn Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist* (Leipzig, 1872), 349–51, tr. B. Dodge as *The Fihrist of al Nadīm* (Cambridge, 1970), 2:836–42.

[31] E.g., anon., *Ḥudūd*, 84; Marwazī/Minorsky, 13, tr. 25; D. D. Leslie, "The Identification of Chinese Cities in Arabic and Persian Sources," *Papers of Far Eastern History* 25 (1982), 12. This situation is somewhat surprising because of the evidence of lively maritime commercial relations between Song China and the Middle East. See, e.g., Zhao Rugua, *Zhu fan zhu jiaoshi* (Beijing, 1996), esp. 89–124; Zhao Rugua *Chao Ju-kua on the Chinese and Arab Trade* (New York, 1966), *passim*; S. Yoshinobu, "Sung Foreign Trade: Its Scope and Organization," in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China among Equals* (Berkeley, 1983), 104–6, and the connections between the Liao and the Qarakhanids and Ghaznawids in Central Asia (see pp. 33, 98).

a more composite picture of China that at least reflected the political division of the post-Tang period. The most relevant information appears in Maḥmūd Kāshgharī's *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dīwān lughāt al-Turk)*, composed by a scion of the Qarakhanids in late eleventh-century Baghdad, and in Marwazī's zoological treatise *The Natural Properties of Animals (Ṭabāyi' al-ḥayawān)*, written around 1120 by a court physician from Marw (in modern Turkmenistan).

Kāshgharī states that: "Ṣīn [i.e., China] is originally three fold: Upper, in the east which is called Tawjāch; middle which is Khitāy, lower which is Barkhān in the vicinity of Kashgar. But now Tawjāch is known as Maṣīn and Khitai as Ṣīn."[32] Tawjāch (usually rendered as Tamghāj/ch, but also as Tafghāj, Tabghāj) originated from the name of the ruling clan of the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534), transcribed as Toba in Chinese. It was by this name that China was known in the Turkic Orkhon inscriptions of the eighth century, and the name continued to be in use in Turkestan at least until the early thirteenth century.[33] The differentiation between Ṣīn and Māṣīn (Persian: Chīn, Māchīn) originated in India (Sanskrit: Maha chin, greater China) and was already in use at the height of the Tang. Originally Machin represented Changan, in north China, while Chin represented Canton (Guangzhou; in the south). Yet in post-Tang times Ṣīn (Chīn) gradually acquired the meaning of north China, and Māṣīn (Māchīn) meant the south. Muslim writers, however, sometimes used this pair of toponyms as an equivalent to the lands of Gog and Magog, also connected to the eastern fringes of the world, and the differentiation between southern and northern China was not always as apparent as in Kāshgharī.[34] The identification of Kashgar with China probably goes back to its position under the Tang, when it was the seat of one of Tang's "Four Garrisons" in the Anxi protectorate.[35]

Marwazī also defined China as a great eastern country, whose territories are divided into three categories: Ṣīn, the greatest of the three; Qitai or Khitai; and Yugur (the yellow Uighurs). Tafghāj (i.e., Tamghāj) appears as the title of the emperor of Ṣīn, also known as Faghfūr,[36] and Māṣīn and SNQU (*Song guo*, the Song state?) are vaguely located beyond Ṣīn.[37] Marwazī's information is clearly based on an embassy that reached Ghazna (in Afghanistan) in 1027, sent by the Khans of Khitai and Uighur, whose letters are cited in Marwazī's work. It is through those emissaries that he recorded the distances and roads leading to the lands of Khitai and Uighur, and unlike Kāshgharī, for him Kashgar was not part of one of

[32] Kāshgharī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Divān Lughat al-Turk)* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 1:341 (art. 228).

[33] Zhou Jianqi, "Guanyu 'Tao hua shi'," *Nei menggu daxue xuebao* 1985/4, 57–65; Jiang Qixiang, *Xinjiang Hei Han chao qianbi* (Urumchi, 1990), 98–108; Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:217.

[34] Pelliot, *Polo*, 1:272–3.

[35] On the Tang's Anxi protectorate see, e.g., D. Twitchett and H. J. Wechsler, "Kao-tsung (reign 649–83) and the Empress Wu: The Inheritor and the Usurper," in D. Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 3: The Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (Cambridge, 1979), 281, 285–6.

[36] Faghfūr was the common designation of the Chinese emperor in Muslim texts. The word is attested in Parthian Pahlavi as *baghpuhr* or, less frequent, *baghbūr*, son of god. It designated both Jesus and the Chinese "son of heaven" (Tianzi). See "Faghfūr," *EI2* 2 (1965), 738.

[37] Marwazī/Minorsky, 2, 3, 7, tr. 14, 15, 18.



the "Chinas," only a station in the way to them.[38] Marwazī's detailed description of Ṣīn in the main repeats elements from the general image of China mentioned above, including several anachronisms.[39] Of special importance, however, is his description of the circumstances that resulted in the division of China into three kingdoms, as follows:

> In ancient times all the districts of Transoxania had belonged to the kingdom of China [Ṣīn], with the district of Samarqand as its centre. When Islam appeared and God delivered the said district to the Muslims, the Chinese migrated to their [original] centers, but there remained in Samarqand, as a vestige of them, the art of making paper of high quality. And when they migrated to Eastern parts their lands became disjoined and their provinces divided, and there was a king in China and a king in Qitai and a king in Yugur.[40]

The Chinese evacuation of Transoxania probably refers to the battle of Talas (751), the first major military confrontation between Muslims and Chinese,[41] but the historicity of the story is not important here. What is important is that more than 350 years after the battle of Talas, Transoxania, later the most western part of the Western Liao empire, still retained the memory of Chinese sovereignty.[42]

Even for the most knowledgeable Muslim sources on China in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the geographical and cultural boundaries of China were completely undefined, including either the Uighur state in Gansu or the much more western area of Kashgar, later a part of the Western Liao empire. Neither of these two last realms is taken as "less Chinese" than the others. It is also important to note that both authors explicitly identify Khitai as China.[43]

The memory of Chinese occasional sovereignty in pre-Mongol Muslim Central Asia, described by Marwazī, can be corroborated from other evidence – that of the rulers' titles. Among the Qarakhanid dynasty, to whose realm the Western Liao succeeded, Tawgach or Tamghaj Khan (Turkic: the Khan of China) was a highly prestigious title translated as "of great and inveterate rule."[44] In the Arabic form of the title, *Malik al-mashriq* (or *al-sharq*) *wa'l-Ṣīn* ("the King of the East and China"), the connection to China is even more apparent. The origin of this title is obscure. Pritsak traced it to the Qarluq forefathers of the Qarakhanids, among whom it

[38] Marwazī/Minorsky, 6–9, tr. 18–21.

[39] Marwazī/Minorsky, esp. 10–15, tr. 22–7, and see the detailed commentary in 61–92.

[40] Marwazī/Minorsky, 6, tr. 18.

[41] For the battle of Talas and the events leading to it see H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia* (London, 1923), *passim*; C. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton, 1987), 127–40; Twitchett, "Hsuan-tsung," 433–5.

[42] This memory was much stronger than Tang actual achievements in the region: Samarqand was at best a nominal vassal of the Tang, and had been conquered by the Muslims before 715 (Gibb, *Arab Conquests*, 42 ff.).

[43] This is not at all obvious. Gardīzī, writing in 1050, only a few decades before Kāshgharī, reports the embassy of "Qatā and Uighur Khan" (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, 191), yet gives a totally "traditional" description of China, presenting it as a unified empire and making no connection between it and the two names mentioned above (Gardīzī, *Zayn*, 268–71).

[44] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:341.

had appeared as early as the ninth century.[45] Chinese scholars, who traced the Qarakhanids' origin to the Uighurs and not to the Qarluqs, also saw it as stemming from the pre-dynastic period of the Qarakhanids and their relations with the Tang after moving to Gaochang.[46] The title is widely attested from approximately the early eleventh century, when in 1017/18 the Khaqan of Samarqand, Yūsuf b. Ḥasan, was called Tamghaj Khan.[47] He was probably the same Khaqan of Samarqand on whom the 'Abbāsid Caliph conferred the equivalent title *Malik al-mashriq wa'l-Ṣīn* in the days of Maḥmūd of Ghazna (r. 998–1030).[48] Whether the Caliph's title was partially responsible for that or not, it is indeed from that time on that the wide use of the title Tamghaj Khan is attested in both literary and numismatic sources. After the dissolution of the Qarakhanid realm into eastern and western kingdoms in 1041, the title was used by most of the rulers of the Western Qarakhanid khanates of Transoxania, from the mid-eleventh to the early twelfth centuries, and by several important rulers in the eastern khanate, about whom our information is much more limited.[49] Unfortunately, for that reason, the specific Qarakhanid rulers who fought the Qara Khitai are not positively attested to as bearing this title.

The Western Liao, then, arrived in a region in which China, though vaguely known, was closely connected with notions of grandeur and prestige. Most of the Muslim regions subject to the Western Liao considered themselves to have been parts of China, if not in the present then in the past, and Khita/Khitai, as the Western Liao was called by Central Asian Muslims, was known as one form of China. Whether there was a more than superficial commitment to Chinese traditions or not, even the Chinese trappings of the Western Liao (such as seals, tablets, Chinese characters, coins) had therefore an enormous value as legitimizing factors in Central Asia. This must be taken into account when considering their survival. Jade artifacts of local production which contained Chinese motifs, Song porcelain and Chinese mirrors unearthed in the central territory of the Western Liao,[50] together with unique Jin porcelain vessels from late twelfth-century Samarqand,[51] testify to the fact that the Western Liao could supply the "superb artisanship" component of the Muslim image of China, though perhaps mostly by trade.[52]

The Muslim perception of Central Asia as a part of China continued and was even strengthened throughout the reign of the Western Liao. In 1206 Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh defined China (*Chīn*) as part of Turkestan,[53] and not only Kashgar but also Balāsāghūn is described as a city of China in twelfth- and

[45] Pritsak, "Karluk zu Karakhaniden," 289–90.
[46] Jiang Qixiang, *Xinjiang*, 106–7; Zhou Jianqi, "'Tao hua shi'," 64.
[47] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:299.
[48] Niẓām al-Mulk, *Siyar*, 190, tr. 153. This is of course another indication of the undefined borders of China.
[49] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 22–3 (and see there for a list of the different titles on each Khan's coins); Jiang Qixiang, *Xinjiang*, 107.
[50] Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 169–72; Bernshtam, *Chujskaia dolina*, 47–55, 139–42.
[51] L. Sokolovskaia and A. Rougeulle, "Stratified Finds of Chinese Porcelains from Pre-Mongol Samarkand (Afrasiab)", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 6 (1992), 87–98.
[52] For a preliminary description of Western Liao trade with the Chinese states see pp. 137–8.
[53] Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, *Ta'rīkh-i Fakhru'd-Dīn Mubārakshāh* (London, 1927), 39. See also the title of the (non-surviving) map quoted on p. 61: "The country of China: map of Turkestan and Transoxania (*Bilād al-Ṣīn: ṣūrat Turkestān wā-Mā warā' al-nahr*).



post-twelfth-century geographical works.[54] In a geographical treatise, dedicated to the Khwārazm Shāh Muḥammad (r. 1200–20), a vassal and later a major rival of the Western Liao, the author, while discussing the immigration of the Khitans into Central Asia, proposed a new division of China, without however defining its borders: Inner China in the east, also called Māchīn, and Outer China, which is defined as China proper.[55] The title Tamghaj Khan continued to be used by most of the important rulers of Western Qarakhanid khanates.[56] Moreover, in four epitaphs, two from Samarqand dated 1163 and 1183, one from Balāsāghūn dated 1194/5, and one from an unspecified place on the way from Samarqand to Shāsh (Tashkent) dated 1211/12, i.e., soon after the expulsion of the Western Liao from the region, there is inscribed the title *Muftī al-sharq wa'l-Ṣīn* ("the Mufti [jurisconsult] of the East and of China").[57] Thus the perception of Central Asia as being connected with China was not limited to the political sphere alone.

Western Liao policies of non-destructive conquest, religious tolerance, broad autonomy and usually reasonable financial demands certainly added to the dynasty's legitimacy among their Muslim subjects, as well as strengthening its association with civilized China rather than with "barbarian" nomadic invaders. For their nomad subjects, the Western Liao stressed their affinity with the Turks, a theme which is emphasized by the Muslim sources.[58] The Inner Asian title Gürkhan carried enough prestige among Mongol tribes to be adopted by several contestants for Mongol leadership, e.g., some Kereyid leaders and Jamugha, Chinggis Khan's main rival.[59] Significantly, however, throughout their reign the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam, an important component of the identity of Central Asian peoples that was adopted by both their predecessors, the Qarakhanids, and their successors, the Chaghadaid Mongols. But despite their failure to convert, Muslims held important posts in Western Liao central and local administration,[60] and by the early 1140s the Western Liao were quite familiar with Muslim diplomatic conventions.[61]

[54] Ibn Funduq (late twelfth century) *Ta'rīkh-i Bayhaq* (Tehran, 1938), 5, 53; Ibn al-Dawādārī (fourteenth century), *Kanz al-durar* 7:238.
[55] Bakrān, *Jahān nāmah*, 70–1. The notions of Inner and Outer China (but not together) appear also in two other twelfth-century works, at least one of which was written before the Qara Khitai. The anonymous early twelfth-century *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa'l-kiṣṣaṣ* (Tehran, 1939) mentions, in addition to the "regular" *Chīn*, *Chīn-i andarūnī*, Inner China, whose ruler's title, according to one variant, was the Tughuzghuz Khaqan (*Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, 420). Al-Idrīsī mentions *Ṣīn al-khārija* (Outer China), east of the Tughuzghuz country (al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtiyār al-āfāq* [Naples, 1970–4], 510), which Yule identified as the land of the Tanguts: H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither* (Taibei, 1966), 1:143.
[56] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 22; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 43.
[57] L. N. Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Samarkanda XI–XIV vv. Tom. 1* (Doshanbe, 1992), 156, 179; M. Hartmann, "Archäologisches aus Russisch-Turkestan – III," *Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung* 9 (1906), 297–304; V. V. Nastits, "Arabskie i Persidskie nadpisi na Kajrakakh s gorodishcha Burana," in E. A. Davidovich (ed.), *Kirgiziia pri Karakhanidakh* (Frunze, 1983), 225, 232–3.
[58] See pp. 143–6.
[59] *SH*, 68/141, 79/150, 104/177; *SHdR*, 1:63 (141), 73 (150), 97–8 (177); Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 61–3.
[60] See, e.g., Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 155–6; *YS*, 120/2969–70. See pp. 126–7 below.
[61] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5.

I would like to suggest that the failure to Islamize was closely connected to the Qara Khitai's adherence to the Chinese–Liao tradition, and that the two cultures in a way provided the Inner Asian nomads with similar functions. A detailed account of the reasons for the Western Liao's reluctance to convert to Islam will be included in chapter 6. For now it will suffice to say that both this and their inclusion in the cycle of legitimate Chinese dynasties underscore the importance of the Chinese component in Western Liao identity.

## The administration as an example

The discussion of Qara Khitai administration serves as another way to evaluate the commitment of the Qara Khitai to Chinese patterns. A few words about Chinese administration are therefore in order here. I will sketch below two main models. First, the "native" Chinese model, based on what was common to the (very different) Tang and Song administrations, with which the Khitans were acquainted; and second, the administration of the conquest or northern dynasties (Liao, Jin, Yuan, Qing). Since the Chinese elements in the Qara Khitai empire are likely to be based upon Liao precedents, I will stress a few of its characteristics and their possible survival in the Western Liao.

The native Chinese administration was headed by the emperor, on whose person ultimate power was ideally centered. Beneath the emperor stood the bureaucracy, the officials of which the emperor could promote, demote or transfer. Local posts were normally limited to a term of office not exceeding three years. The ideological basis for the selection of personnel was mainly Confucianism, and a considerable proportion of the officials were recruited through the examination system. Law was codified and universal. Self-administration and self-determination by ethnic entities or social groups existed only as a rare exception in the frontier areas. The degree of militarization was higher under the Tang and relatively low under the Song, but in both the civil and military authorities remained separate. The administrative language was Chinese. Succession was on the whole regulated, and nominating the heir apparent was the duty of the reigning emperor, whose choice was rarely contested.[62]

Northern Chinese administration combined Chinese elements, with which the conquerors were familiar even before entering China, with the conquerors' native, Inner Asian traditions. The emperor, whose status was stressed through the adoption of Chinese court rituals, remained the ideal center of power, and the head of the state and its administration. His authority, however, was much more personalized than in the native Chinese state. His relations with his closer officials were mainly personal and not bureaucratic, and thus officials were chosen according to their loyalty to the ruler and their – often military – talents. Posts were much less

[62] H. Franke, "The Role of the State as Structural Element in Polyethnic Societies," in S. R. Schram (ed.), *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China* (London and Hong Kong, 1987), 91; for a summarized description of the Tang and Song administrations, and the many differences between them, see Hucker, *Dictionary*, 28–52.



rigidly limited by time, and were often hereditary. The imperial household – *ordu* or *ordo* in Liao terminology – functioned as a state within a state, and was the backbone of the army. The degree of centralization was lower than in the native Chinese case, and the Inner Asian tradition of joint decision making was at least partially retained.

Ethnicity was a guiding principle in the management of those states: Different laws applied to different peoples, and the administration was differentiated by the ethnicity of the regional population.[63] In the Liao case this resulted in its famous dual administration. The administration was divided into northern and southern divisions (*bei mian*, *nan mian*). The northern division handled the affairs of the Khitans and other nomads as well as the emperor's personal retinue, in continuation of the Khitan native tradition, while the southern dealt with the sedentary population, Chinese and Bohai, and was organized on the basis of the Tang bureaucracy.[64] The administration was multi-ethnic, like the population over which it ruled. In the Liao case, both divisions were staffed by Khitans and Chinese, together with some Bohais and others.[65] It was also multilingual, and in the Liao case Chinese and Khitan were commonly used, while letters to the Central Asian rulers were written in Turkic.[66]

Succession struggles were much more common among the conquest dynasties, mainly due to the fact that the right to rule was understood as belonging to the whole royal clan. The reign of Tianzuo, the last Liao emperor, certainly expresses this tradition.[67]

Another characteristic, consistent with the nomadic background of some of the northern peoples, was the use of multiple capitals.[68] The Liao peculiarity (originating from the Bohai) was a system of five capitals, which was also the basis of the Liao regional administration. Each capital administered a circuit (*dao*) of the same name, and the circuits were divided into prefectures (*zhou*) and counties (*xian*).[69] The emperor, however, spent only a small part of his time in the capitals. Most of the year he moved between his seasonal residences (*nabo*) in which he continued hunting and fishing. When he came to one of the capitals, his "court," a huge city of tents, was placed near or in the capital and from it he conducted the empire's affairs.[70]

[63] Franke, "State," 92–110; E. S. Rawsky, "Presidential Address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55 (1996), 837.

[64] WF, 434–50. There and in Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 77–80 the northern administration is described as also divided among northern and southern branches. Yang Ruowei, though using the same sources, advocates only a clear-cut northern–southern division: Yang Ruowei, *Qidan wangchao zhengzhi junshi zhidu yanjiu* (Beijing, 1991), 86–171.

[65] WF, 450–65.

[66] Franke, "State," 110; H. Franke and D. Twitchett, "Introduction," in *CHC6*, 30–6; Rawsky, "Reenvisioning the Qing," 838; Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:84 (art. 25). Marwazī cites the letters of the Liao and Uighur rulers in Arabic, but says they are brought in translation (Marwazī/Minorsky, 7, tr. 19).

[67] See pp. 21–6.

[68] Rawsky, "Reenvisioning the Qing," 838.

[69] WF, 448–9; Yang Ruowei, *Qidan*, 172–214.

[70] WF, 131–4; V. S. Taskin, "Pokhodnye lageria kidan'skikh imperatorov," in G. D. Sukharchuk, et al. (eds.), *Kitaj: Obshestvo i gosudarstvo* (Moscow, 1973), 101–15.

Before analyzing the different traditions that underlay Qara Khitai administration, however, I will review what can be gleaned about it from the sources, although this is far from a complete picture.

### *The central administration*

The central administration refers to the administration of the territories directly subject to the Gürkhan as opposed to those governed by subject kingdoms and tribes. One therefore has first to define this central territory, which is not an easy task.

#### The central territory

The center of Qara Khitai rule was undoubtedly in the Chu valley, in modern Qyrghyzstan, where their capital, Quz Ordo (*Husi woerduo*) was situated, near or at Balāsāghūn.[71] This was the area to which people came to ask for the Gürkhan's help,[72] and the region was still associated with the Qara Khitai after their collapse.[73] Yet the borders of the central territory beyond the Chu valley are less easy to determine.

One can get a rough idea of its extent by subtracting from the overall territory of the empire the regions that were ruled by the subject kingdoms and tribes: the eastern half of the Tian Shan range and the northern fringes of the Tarim basin held by the Gaochang Uighurs; the region of Kashgar and Khotan under the Eastern Qarakhanids; Almaliq, Qayaliq and Pūlād under the Qarluqs; Transoxania under the Western Qarakhanids; the Naiman territory between the Altai and the Selenga river; and the Qangli homeland north of Lake Balqash. Yet there are two problems with this method: The first is that the boundaries of those kingdoms and tribes are not themselves well defined. The second is how to treat lesser rulers, whose cities seem to have been included in the central territory. For example, in Güchülüg's reign (1211–18) Kāsān in Farghāna was subject to Balāsāghūn, i.e., it was part of the central territory.[74] Yet the coins of Kāsān point to the presence of a Qarakhanid line of princes, attested until 605/1208, and the sultan of Kāsān is mentioned in a late twelfth-century episode in *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*.[75] It is, of course, possible that Kāsān became part of the central territory only after 1208, but it seems reasonable that the Qara Khitai would not have bothered to eliminate petty town rulers in their central territories. This means that other towns about whose rulers we are informed cannot automatically be excluded from the central territory.

[71] *LS*, 30/357; *JS*, 121/2637; see pp. 106–7 below.
[72] E.g., Ong Khan (*SH*, 152/80, 177/104; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:274–5); Güchülüg (Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:334; Juwaynī, 1:46, tr. Boyle, 62; *SH*, 133/198); the *ṣadrs* of Bukhara ('Awfī, *Lubāb*, 517).
[73] E.g., Liu Yu, *Xi you lu*, in Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:129; *Chang Chun*, 1/41; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 88.
[74] *YS*, 120/2969.
[75] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32; Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh* (Tehran, 1972), 377.



This is especially relevant for the towns of Farghāna and the Jaxartes region (e.g., Uzgand, Utrār, Marghīnān, Fanākit), where minor Qarakhanid rulers are attested,[76] yet we hardly know anything about their relations with the Qara Khitai.

Trying to define the central territory by references in the sources leaves us with similar problems: A broad definition of the territory under the direct control of the Qara Khitai can be deduced from the alleged agreement of Güchülüg and Sultan Muḥammad, who intended to divide the Qara Khitai territory between them on the basis of their relative success in vanquishing the Gürkhan. According to the agreement, if Güchülüg captured the Gürkhan first, he would rule his territories up to Fanākit on the banks of the Jaxartes, while if Muḥammad was first, he would get the Gürkhan's territories up to either Kashgar and Khotan or Kashgar and Almaliq.[77] Presumably the winner would have taken the Qara Khitai central territory. Thus this very broad definition locates the central territory as stretching between Fanākit on the Jaxartes to Kashgar, Khotan and Almaliq, i.e., excluding at least Transoxania, Gaochang and Jungaria.[78]

In order to narrow down this vast territory, one must turn to Juwaynī, who mentions four towns into which the Gürkhan sent *shiḥnas* (commissioners, about which see below) after establishing himself in Balāsāghūn. Those towns are Qam Kemchit, in the region of the upper Yenisei (between the Qam – Upper Yenisei – and its tributary the Kemchit); Barskhān, south of the Issyk Kul near Qara Qol (Przhevalsk); Ṭarāz, i.e., Talas near modern Jambul and *Yafinch [? YAMN], a town near the Ili and a name of a river which Minorsky identified with the Qara Tal.[79] Among these towns, at least Barskhān and Talas are connected with the Qara Khitai by other sources as well,[80] and Talas, the headquarters of Tayangu, the Qara Khitai general who was active in the west, can therefore represent the northwestern border of the central territory. Indeed, Bernshtam, drawing on his archaeological findings, claims that the features that characterize the Qara Khitai culture appear only in the region of Semirechye up to Talas (but not in the city itself).[81] Barskhān and *Yafinch are certainly included within Semirechye. Qam Kemchit, however, is much more problematic: it is further to the north, and the realms of the Naiman and Qangli are located to its south, cutting through the territory under Qara Khitai direct rule. It is doubtful whether the Qara Khitai retained effective control in this area after the surrender of the Naiman and Qangli to the Jin in 1175.[82]

What of the regions between Semirechye and the Jaxartes, Kashgar, Khotan and Almaliq? On the one hand, we know that in most of those cities there were local rulers subject to the Qara Khitai. Yet those cities are the ones the sources

[76] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32.
[77] Juwaynī, 1:46, 2:83, tr. Boyle, 63, 357; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 99; see pp. 78–80 for fuller discussion.
[78] This broad definition of the Qara Khitai central territory corresponds also to the rather vague definition of the fourteenth-century *Majma' al-ansāb*, in which the territory called "Qara Khitai" is distinct from both Transoxania and Turkestan and located between them (*Majma' al-ansāb*, 230).
[79] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356 and notes 8, 9, 10; anon., *Ḥudūd*, 276–7.
[80] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 101; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:97; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5.
[81] Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 168–70. [82] *JS*, 121/2637.

explicitly mention as the places, besides Balāsāghūn, in which the Qara Khitai resided: Kashgar,[83] Qayaliq and Almaliq,[84] as well as Uzgand.[85] The reference to Qayaliq and Almaliq deals with the initial stages of the Qara Khitai empire, before the establishment of the Qarluq principalities there.[86] Uzgand, however, was the center of the line of the Farghāna Qarakhanids, attested until the early thirteenth century,[87] and the Eastern Qarakhanid presence in Kashgar is attested for the whole period of Qara Khitai rule at least until the rise of Güchülüg.[88] How, then, can they be included in the territory under the direct rule of the Qara Khitai?

The most logical explanation is that the Qara Khitai lived in the open territories near the above-mentioned cities (Kashgar and Uzgand, and perhaps also Qayaliq and Almaliq) while the towns themselves remained under the jurisdiction of their local rulers. This fits with the description of the Qara Khitai capital as a city of tents (i.e., outside the city of Balāsāghūn);[89] with Bernshtam's claim regarding Talas mentioned above; and with the known Khitan method of establishing cities mainly for the sedentary population.[90] The total lack of information about the Farghāna Qarakhanids' relations with the Qara Khitai makes it hard to determine whether Uzgand was included in the central territory but like Kāsān retained its ruler, or if it was a subject state. The same problem is apparent also for the cities between Talas and the Jaxartes, originally subject to the Western Qarakhanids. It seems, however, that there was little practical difference between the two situations.[91]

With these difficulties in mind, the tentative conclusion about the size of the central territory is that it was centered in the Chu valley around Balāsāghūn, reaching in the northwest to Talas, in the southwest to Kāsān and Uzgand, in the south at least to Barskhān but probably up to the outskirts of Kashgar and Almaliq, and in the northeast to Qayaliq; at present the northern border cannot be defined.[92]

## The question of capital(s)

Balāsāghūn, also known as Quz Ordu or *ordu*, is explicitly named as the capital of the Qara Khitai.[93] Its location, a long-debated issue in Soviet archaeology,

[83] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 46. [84] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:95.
[85] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; see also Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 64.
[86] It was probably founded only after the battle of Qatwān in 1141. See p. 115 below.
[87] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32; Pritsak, "Karachaniden," 57–9; E. A. Davidovich, "Voprosy khronologii i genealogii Karakhanidov vtoroj poloviny XII v.," in *Srednaia Aziia v drevnosti i srednevekovye-istoriia i kul'tura* (Moscow, 1977), 177–87.
[88] See p. 81. [89] *JS*, 121/2637.
[90] S. Jagchid, "The Kitans and their Cities," in S. Jagchid, *Essays in Mongolian Studies* (Provo, 1988), 21–34.
[91] See pp. 112 and 115–25 below. [92] Cf. Barthold, *Studies*, 1:103.
[93] See nn. 71–3; also 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 155. For the different meanings of the names Balāsāghūn and Quz Ordo see G. G. Pikov, "O stolitse gosudarstva Zapadnykh Kidaneij," in V. E. Larichev (ed.), *Vostochnaia Aziia i sosednie territorii v srednie veka* (Novosibirsk, 1986), 26–8. According to the *LS*, 106/1540, *Husi woerduo* means "the strong *ordu*." Kāshgharī translated *quz* as "the shaded side" as in the expression *quz tagh*, the shaded side of the mountain, i.e., "the side which remains to the left of the sun and is always covered with cold and snow" (Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:260, 2:211).



is now generally accepted as Burana, near Tokmaq in northern Qyrghyzstan.[94] Balāsāghūn, however, was an established city, formerly the capital of the Eastern Qarakhanids, while Quz Ordo is described as "a city of tents" that it took half a day to circle.[95] The Qara Khitai tents were probably spread outside Balāsāghūn, and were called after it. In the course of time a few permanent buildings were erected near the tent city. These buildings, which Bernshtam has defined as "the Khitan quarter" of Balāsāghūn, were located in the vicinity of Akbeshim, about 5 km south of Burana, where remains of Buddhist temples have been unearthed.[96]

The multi-capital system of the Liao led researchers to look for other Qara Khitai capitals as well, despite the fact that the term for Balāsāghūn in the *Liao shi* (*du*) is different from the Khitan term for their capitals (*jing*). On his way through Mongolia in the 1220s, Chang Chun heard that the Qara Khitai had established their capital (*du*) in Samarqand, "the most beautiful and fertile place in the Muslim lands."[97] This information is not repeated during the account of Chang Chun's actual stay in Samarqand, and it seems to be a mere confusion with Balāsāghūn, also famous for its fertility.[98] The *Liao shi*, however, defines Samarqand as *Hezhong fu*, the *fu* (administration) of between the rivers (i.e. Transoxania), a name that is also attested by Chang Chun and Yelü Chucai.[99] Since in Liao times *fu* usually, but not exclusively, signified the metropolitan areas surrounding the five capitals, and also because of Chang Chun's above-mentioned assertion, Qing scholars assumed that Samarqand served as the western capital of the Qara Khitai.[100] Wittfogel and Feng, as well as Pikov, accept this view, also citing Juwaynī, who says that the Gürkhan forbade his troops to loot Samarqand while fighting in the city in the 1210s, claiming it as his treasury.[101]

As the center of the richest Qara Khitai province, Samarqand could understandably be called the Gürkhan's treasury. It is also possible that the Qara Khitai administrative apparatus in Transoxania was more developed than in other kingdoms (see below). Yet Samarqand was clearly the capital of the Western Qarakhanid kingdom, a Qara Khitai vassal – i.e., it was not under the direct rule of the Qara Khitai.

[94] V. D. Goriacheva, "O lokalizatsii goroda Balasagun," in *Stranitsy istorii i materialnoj kul'tury Kirgizstana* (Frunze, 1975), *passim*; V. D. Goriacheva, *Srednevekovye gorodskie tsentry i arkhitekturnye ansambli Kirgizii (Burana, Uzgen, Safid-Bulan)* (Frunze, 1983), 54–66; Pikov, "O stolitse," 30, 27; K. M. Bajpakov, *Srednevekovye goroda Kazakhstana na Velikom Shelkovom puti* (Almaty, 1998), 146–9.
[95] *JS*, 121/2637.
[96] Pikov, "O stolitse," 30; Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 168–70. Akbeshim is also identified as Suyāb, the capital of the Western Turks and their splinter groups that flourished in the seventh and eighth centuries. See Bajpakov, *Sredneve kovye goroda*, 146–9, for a recent discussion of this issue. For the confused dating of the Buddhist temples see pp. 173–5.
[97] *Chang Chun*, 1/20a; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 68.
[98] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. Chang Chun's Mongolian informant also said that there were seven Qara Khitai emperors, which is another example of his inaccurate information.
[99] *LS*, 30/357; *Chang Chun*, 1/20a; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 68; YLCC-*ZR*, 6/114–17; YLCC-*XYL*, 3a, tr. 20.
[100] Wang Guowei, "Xi Liao du cheng Husi woerduo Kao," in *LSHB* 9:76-1–76-5, and see also his note to Chang Chun (1/20a); see, e.g., Wei Yuan (d. 1857), *Yuan shi xin bian* (Yangzhou, 1990), 17/208 where Samarqand is explicitly described as the western capital of the Qara Khitai.
[101] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359; WF, 666; Pikov, "O stolitse," 25–6.

Its status was therefore very different from that of the Liao capitals,[102] even if it was thus designated, a fact that I doubt.[103] Kashgar and Uzgand, where the Qara Khitai allegedly resided, and also Utrār, are suggested by Pikov as other Western Liao capitals,[104] yet there is no conclusive evidence to support this view or the existence of any capital apart from Balāsāghūn.

### The administration of the central territory

At the head of the Qara Khitai administration stood the Gürkhan, the Khan of Khans or universal Khan.[105] The Gürkhan also bore the title of Chinese emperor (or empress) and maintained the Chinese custom of assigning reign titles (*nian hao*).[106] When Yelü Dashi was enthroned as the first Western Liao emperor, he also continued the Chinese tradition of conferring honorary titles upon the dynasty's ancestors, granting such titles to his parents, as well as to his wife and to the forefathers of fifty of his most loyal followers.[107] The Gürkhans–emperors were also known as Dashi, after the name or title of the founder of the Qara Khitai empire.[108]

The Gürkhan was the supreme ruler of the empire, the leader of its army and the one who determined the empire's internal and external policies.[109] Descriptions of the Gürkhan from the time of Yelü Dashi emphasize the awe and respect he enjoyed from his kinsmen, and the effectiveness of his commands throughout his empire.[110] Most famous is Ibn al-Athīr's report that the Gürkhan never divided appanages among his commanders, nor did he appoint a commander over more than a hundred men, a statement that became the basis for the alleged centralism of the Qara Khitai.[111] The sources indeed support the first part of this statement, i.e., that in sharp contrast to the customs of his predecessors in Central Asia or in Liao China,[112] the Gürkhan did not allocate appanages: Salaries were paid, and the wealth acquired by the Gürkhan's officials was never described in terms of land.[113] The payments to the army enabled the Gürkhan to enforce strict discipline among his troops and to strictly forbid pillage of the empire's territories.[114] The second part of Ibn al-Athīr's statement is, however, contradicted by several examples in

[102] WF, 666. [103] See also *XLSG*, 58; JZA 1996, 73; neither refers to Samarqand as a capital.
[104] Pikov, "O stolitse." The reference to Utrār is based on Lane-Pool's *Muhammadean Dynasties* (1899). I have found nothing in the sources to support this hypothesis.
[105] For the suggested etymologies of this Inner Asian title see pp. 38–9.
[106] *LS*, 30/357–8; *BSJ*, 5962. See table 1. [107] *LS*, 30/357.
[108] E.g., *JS*, 121/2637, and see appendix 1.
[109] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84 ff.; *JS*, 121/2637; *LS*, 30/357 for Yilie's census; and chs. 1–3.
[110] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 25; *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, 229.
[111] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; JZA 1996, 70; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao guanzhi jianshu," *Liao Jin shi lunji* 4 (1989), 128.
[112] For the Islamic method of *iqṭāʿ* (land assignments, mainly in return for military service) see, e.g., C. Cahen, "Iḳṭāʿ," *EI2* 3 (1971), 1088–91 and the references there; Lambton, *Continuity*, 97–129. For the appanages (*touxia*) of the Liao see, e.g., Chen Shu, *Qidan shehui jingji shigao* (Beijing, 1978), 17–24.
[113] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 74–5; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 242; ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 155–6.
[114] See, e.g., Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359; Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah, 338.



which commanders other than the Gürkhan are said to have led armies of 10,000–70,000 warriors, although in each case the appointments were limited to a specific campaign.[115]

Both Yelü Dashi and Yelü Yilie nominated their successors. Dashi chose his son Yilie as his heir, but since the latter was a minor he ordered that his wife succeed first. Yilie's sons were also minors. It is not stated which one of them was chosen to succeed him, but in the meantime Yilie ordered his sister, Pusuwan, to succeed him directly.[116] Succession struggles are attested in the Qara Khitai realm only after Pusuwan's unnatural death (1177).[117]

The Gürkhan's status did not remain stable throughout the dynasty's rule. Several incidents from the later period of the Qara Khitai demonstrate the decline in the Gürkhan's prestige vis-à-vis his relatives and high ministers. The most prominent example is the *coup d'état* executed in 1177 by Xiao Wolila, the father-in-law of Empress Pusuwan (1164–77). The empress's affair with her brother-in-law led Xiao Wolila to kill both her and her lover, his younger son, and he was probably instrumental in organizing the accession of Zhilugu.[118] In Zhilugu's reign (1178–1211), the clearest example of in-laws' power was Güchülüg's usurpation, but even before that, as shown in chapter 3, notables and officials managed to manipulate the Gürkhan.[119] Yet even at this stage the Gürkhan still enjoyed great prestige in the empire, as demonstrated by the fierce competition between Güchülüg and Sultan Muḥammad about which one would hold the Gürkhan, even after Güchülüg actually deposed him.[120]

The central administration included several offices that belonged to the Gürkhan's personal retinue. These were the personal attendants (*jinshi*), the imperial bodyguards (*huwei*), the tutor for the imperial princes[121] and the court physician (who also happened to be Tayangu's panegyrist). ʿAwfī's biography of this doctor enables us to have a rare glimpse into life at the Gürkhan's court. According to him, the Gürkhan's officials were "good companions" of one another, and belonging to their close circle resulted in prestige and wealth. The court officials were generally described as *amīr*s (military commanders), a designation which emphasizes their military roles. Indeed, the court physician himself was also credited with unique military skills which probably helped him in this environment.[122]

Apart from staffing the imperial household, one of the main functions of the central administration was the organization of military campaigns. Most of the titles preserved in chapter 30 of the *Liao shi* belong to the military realm. While most refer to campaign deployments,[123] some titles also point to the maintenance of the bureau of military affairs (*shumi yuan*), an agency that in China controlled the

[115] See p. 147. [116] *LS*, 30/357–8.
[117] *LS*, 30/358; Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 356–7. See ch. 2. [118] See ch. 2 for a full description.
[119] Juwaynī, 1:56–7, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 74–5, 360, and see p. 84.
[120] *LS*, 30/358; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44; Juwaynī, 1:47, 2:83, 125–6, tr. Boyle, 64, 351, 396. See pp. 78–80 and 85 for further examples.
[121] See tables 2 and 3 for those offices and their Liao precedents, whenever there were such.
[122] ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 165–6. [123] See table 2 for those titles and their Liao precedents.

state's military forces, and directed military operations.[124] There is no information, however, about the functions of this bureau or about its relation to other military command posts mentioned in the chapter.

From the actual information about the military activity of the Qara Khitai, it is clear that beneath the Gürkhan, the *fumas* (imperial sons-in-law; in the reign of Pusuwan, also the empress's husband) held a special position in the military leadership. A *fuma* named Abensi commanded the Qara Khitai eastern force in the 1170s;[125] Xiao Duolubu, Pusuwan's husband, commanded the force sent to enthrone Tekish as Khwārazm Shāh in 1172 and subsequently the force that tried to depose Tekish in favor of his brother Sulṭān Shāh in the mid- to late 1170s;[126] a *fuma*, either Xiao Duolubu or someone else bearing the same title, was sent against Khwārazm after the Qara Khitai debacle against the Ghūrids in 1198.[127] Xiao Wolila, the father of the *fuma* Xiao Duolubu, also figured prominently among Qara Khitan commanders, leading the campaign against the Jin in 1134 and the left flank of the Qara Khitan army in the battle of Qatwān in 1141.[128] The titles conferred upon Xiao Wolila are also important for understanding Qara Khitan military administration. While conducting the campaign against the Jin, Xiao Wolila was denoted as "grand marshal" (*bingma du yuan shuai*), one of the important command posts in Liao northern administration.[129] At the battle of Qatwān Wolila's rank was "the great king of the office of the six divisions" (*Liu yuan si da wang*).[130] In Liao times this important position in the northern administration was given to the supervisor of the six divisions of the Yila tribe (from which the Yelü royal clan originated),[131] who controlled the military and civil affairs of the tribes. The post allegedly implies the continuity of the partition of the Qara Khitan imperial tribe into the five and six divisions. However, in Liao times this post was held by a Yelü, not by a Xiao (who of course did not belong to the Yila tribe),[132] thus the continuation of Liao usage was not necessarily exact. However, the *fumas*' and Wolila's positions attest to the important role of the Gürkhan's relatives in the Western Liao ranks. Indeed, the other commanders mentioned in the *Liao shi* belonged either to the Yelü or to the Xiao clans.[133] This strongly suggests that the relations between the Gürkhan and his military commanders were personal and not bureaucratic.

[124] *LS*, 30/356; Hucker, *Dictionary*, 436/5451, WF, 665. The Liao dynasty originally had two such bureaus, Khitan and Chinese, the Khitan one being divided into northern and southern. See Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 77–80 and p. 113 below.

[125] *JS*, 121/2637.

[126] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:377–80; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a; and see ch. 2 and p. 66 for full references.

[127] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137.

[128] *LS*, 30/356.

[129] *LS*, 30/357, 46/735; WF, 548–9 (translated as general commander-in-chief of the army), 668; JZA 1996, 70. The relationship between this title and the *shumi yuan* is not at all clear, however.

[130] Yet due to the *LS* 30's blurred chronology, in which the battle of Qatwān (1141) preceded the journey against the Jin (1134), Xiao Wolila was recorded as advancing from the post of the great king of the office of the six divisions to the post of grand marshal (*LS*, 30/356–7).

[131] In 922 Abaoji, the founder of the Liao, divided the Yila tribe into the five and six divisions. The Yelü clan belonged to the six divisions. See WF, 191–2.

[132] *LS*, 32/376, 45/707; WF, 473, 665; JZA 1996, 65.

[133] See table 2.



Another important post, whose holder also often commanded Qara Khitan troops, was that of *tayangu*, a Turkic title meaning chamberlain.[134] The most famous holder of this post, known only by his title, was the commander of the Qara Khitai troops in Talas who played a decisive role in the battle of Andkhūd and in the battle against the Khwārazm Shāh in 1210.[135] Other holders of this title were Ḥamīd Pūr, a descendant of the Qara Khitai royal house, who served as their emissary to Khwārazm;[136] and Shamur Tayangu, who was influential in handling the Gürkhan's policy towards the Qarluqs.[137] Muslim writers, who describe Tayangu of Talas as the Gürkhan's vizier or commander of the army,[138] attest to the importance of this unique Qara Khitai post. The title is unattested in Liao times, and its immediate precedent is uncertain. Kāshgharī, who explained the word as chamberlain, also noted that in his time the word had already been supplemented by its Arabic equivalent, *ḥājib*.[139] While the *ḥājib* played an important role in Qarakhanid administration, the post did not include military duties and was limited to overseeing the court ceremonies, supervising the foreign ambassadors and selecting the petitions that would be presented before the ruler.[140] The origins of the office of *tayangu* must then lie in a more eastern Turkic realm than that of the Qarakhanids, but there is no direct evidence to confirm this. The title is not mentioned in the Chinese sources. However, Jūzjānī claimed that Tayangu of Talas played an important role in the battle of Qatwān.[141] He might therefore be identical with one of the flank commanders whose titles are mentioned in the *Liao shi*. If this is indeed the case, then dual titulature, Chinese and Inner Asian, was not limited to the office of the emperor alone.[142]

Very little is known about the financial aspects of the central administration, which must have been important, and must have included tax and tribute collection, distribution of salaries and census taking. The vizier Maḥmūd Tai was sent about 1209 to collect the Khwārazmian tribute, after it had been delayed for a few years,[143] but the important aspect of his mission was espionage, not financial responsibility. Later on, Maḥmūd Tai certainly took part in Western Liao military

[134] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 2:344 (art. 610). See Doerfer, *Elemente*, 2:652 who, following Pelliot (PH, 92) and Pritsak ("Karachaniden," 24), refuted Barthold's and Marquart's suggestions of a Chinese etymology for this title (based on *tai wang*, "great prince"). Kāshgharī explains that the original meaning of *tayangu* is "depended upon," "since the king depends on his chamberlain and also the subjects depend on them both to present their petitions to him and receive his answers."

[135] See pp. 65 and 77–8 for more references.

[136] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22.

[137] Juwaynī, 1:56–7, tr. Boyle, 74–5. He might be identical with the famous unnamed Tayangu of Talas.

[138] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268; Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 322.

[139] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 2:344 (art. 610).

[140] Yusuf Khass Hajib (*sic*), *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig)* (Chicago, 1983), 119–23. The *ḥājib* as a general having important military functions is attested in mid-'Abbāsid, Sāmānid and Ghaznavid administrations. The Saljūq post, however, is closer to the Qarakhanid one described above. C. E. Bosworth and A. K. S. Lambton, "Ḥājib," *EI2* 3 (1971), 45–8.

[141] Jūzjānī/Lees, 328.

[142] See also pp. 119–23 below for the dual title *shaojian* (Chinese) and *shiḥna* (Arabo-Persian) for the Gürkhan's representatives in his local territories.

[143] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.

decisions.[144] The offices of the prime minister and his assistant, mentioned by Yelü Chucai as the Gürkhan's officials,[145] might have been part of the financial realm, although their functions are nowhere specified. In Liao times, prime ministers had held both civil and military responsibilities.[146]

Regarding the taxation of the central territory, the peasants near Balāsāghūn paid one-tenth of their crops to the state.[147] In addition to that the subject population probably also had to pay one dinar for each household.[148] A census of households that was conducted after 1151 must have served as the basis for collecting the last-mentioned tax.[149] The information about taxation, however, refers only to the subject population in Western Liao central territory and there is no information about the taxation of the Qara Khitai themselves, if there was any.

### Local administration in the central territory

The office of the *tulu* of the Chachila (Jajirad) tribe that appears in *Liao shi* 30 might imply that the Khitans set imperial representatives among their inner tribes. This argument, proposed by Wittfogel and Feng and developed by Wei Liangtao and Ji Zongan, is based on the similarity between *tulu* and the Liao Khitan title *tuli*, designating an official of the six tribes of the Xi, whose functions are not specified. The same title (*tuli*) appears in the *Jin shi* as a title of Khitan origin that refers to one of the border officials. The mission of this *tuli* was to pacify the border people and to prevent tribal disobedience.[150] Yet this scattered information does not allow us to reach a definite conclusion.

In the towns that were subject to Balāsāghūn (at least in Kāsān, Barskhān, Talas, *Yafinch and Qam Kemchit), the Gürkhan had local commissioners known as *shiḥna* or *basqaq*.[151] Judging from the future career of Ismāʿīl, the *basqaq* of Kāsān, the *shiḥna* had to have both military and civil-administrative skills, which in the case of Ismāʿīl enabled him both to take a prominent role in Jebe's campaign against Güchülüg and to become a successful *darughachi*, provincial governor, in north China under the Mongols.[152]

A final note about the promotion of the central administration's staff is in place here: Officials were promoted from the *ordu* personnel to the local administration (as in the case of Ismāʿīl) or from the local staff to the central administration (as in the case of Yelü Yanshan, the *tulu*). Certain families, such as Li Shichang's, supplied the empire with several generations of administrators.[153]

### The question of dual administration

One of Dashi's first actions after he had left Tianzuo on his way to Kedun was to nominate northern and southern officials,[154] yet the administrative meaning of such nominations at this early stage is unclear. In Kedun, Yelü Dashi addressed the eighteen tribes and seven prefectures,[155] a dichotomy that attests to a certain differentiation between sedentary and nomadic administrations, though not necessarily of Dashi's creation. After the speech at Kedun, however, when Dashi was joined by more than 10,000 warriors, he is described only as appointing officials (i.e., not specifically northerners and/or southerners).[156] The officials who around 1131–2 enthroned Yelü Dashi as emperor are described by the general term *wenwu bai guan*, the hundred (i.e., numerous) civil and military officials,[157] a term that does not necessarily imply the existence of dual administration.

Most of the Chinese titles attested in Balāsāghūn originated in the Liao northern administration.[158] Yet those who claim that the dual administration continued under the Western Liao emphasize the existence of a few offices that in Liao times belonged to the southern realm.[159] Their argument is essentially based upon the two titles connected to the bureau of military affairs (*shumi yuan*). Liao administration included two such bureaus, Khitan and Chinese, with the Khitan one divided into two bureaus, northern and southern.[160] The specific titles connected to the *shumi yuan* in chapter 30 of the *Liao shi* indeed appear elsewhere in the *Liao shi* as titles of officials of the fourth (*shumi fushi*) and fifth (*tongzhi shumi yuan shi*) degrees in the Chinese *shumi yuan*.[161] Yet the officials mentioned bore relatively low titles for the posts that they held in Qatwān or in the campaign of 1134. Furthermore, the fact that the *tongzhi shumi yuan shi* was connected to the front troops of the Dila (Dilie) tribe, one of the eighteen Kedun tribes, i.e., certainly not a sedentary military force,[162] strongly suggests that the borrowing was not exact.

Another title that strengthens the "dualists'" stand is that of the prime minister (*xiang*). This title, however, was certainly prevalent in different echelons of Liao northern and southern bureaucracies.[163] They also mention Yelü Chucai's definition of Li Shichang as *zhong shu*, a form which might be an abridgment of *zhongshu ling* (secretariat director), the leading position in the secretariat of the Liao southern administration.[164] Wittfogel and Feng, however, drawing upon Yelü Chucai's note to his poem, explain that this designation was used only poetically, while Li Shichang's actual title was an assistant to the prime minister (*zhi zheng*).[165]

One should add here a general observation, that continuation of official nomenclature from one dynasty to the next does not necessarily reflect the continuation of the same functions or range of authority of such offices. Indeed, even

144 Juwaynī, 2:89–90, tr. Boyle, 357–8. 145 YLCC-*ZR*, 2/32, 7/153, 8/171 and see table 2.
146 See note 163 below and table 3. 147 *JS*, 121/2637; WF, 664.
148 Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. Cf. WF, 664. 149 *LS*, 30/357.
150 WF, 666; *XLSG*, 65; JZA 1996, 69; *LS*, 46/726, 116/1549; *JS*, 45/1019, 55/1216, 57/1330, 58/1343, 121/2637.
151 *YS*, 120/2969; Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356. 152 *YS*, 120/2969–70.
153 See tables 2 and 3. 154 *JS*, 3/51, 121/2636; *LS*, 29/349; WF, 664.
155 *LS*, 30/355. 156 *LS*, 30/356. 157 *Ibid.* 158 See tables 2 and 3.
159 *XLSG*, 65–6; JZA 1996, 69; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," 125, 128; *ZK*, 129–30.
160 Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 77–80; for a detailed discussion of Liao *shumi yuan* see Yang Ruowei, *Qidan*, 128–52; He Tianming, "Liao dai Qidan nan shumi yuan tantao," *Song Liao Jin Yuan shi* 2003/2, 46–9.
161 *LS*, 47/774. 162 *LS*, 30/357.
163 See, e.g., *LS*, 45/710, where there are northern and southern, left and right *cai xiang* in the northern administration; 47/775, where grand, left and right *cai xiang* of the southern administration's chancellery are mentioned.
164 YLCC-*ZR*, 8/171; *LS*, 47/774; *XLSG*, 66. 165 YLCC-*ZR*, 8/171; WF, 665; cf. *XLSG*, 66.

our scanty evidence strongly suggests this.[166] More to the point, the specific designation of northern and southern or left and right never occurs in Western Liao titles, despite the fact that many of the titles had such variants in Liao times.[167]

In conclusion, there is not enough evidence to support the existence of dual administration in the Qara Khitai realm. Certainly the existing data does not allow us automatically to ascribe Liao forms of government to the Qara Khitai.[168] Indeed, the differing geographical, cultural and demographic patterns did not favor the retention of the Liao administrative model, especially since most of the sedentary population of the Qara Khitai was included not in their central territory but in the subordinate kingdoms. A certain duality is, however, apparent in the dual titles of the Western Liao ruler. Moreover, the principle that guided the adoption of the dual administration in Liao times: "Ruling according to what is common [in each region] brings best results" (*yin su er zhi, dei qi yi yi*)[169] was continued and is apparent especially in the administration of the subject territories of the Qara Khitai.

### *The administration of the subject territories*

Apart from the central territory, the Qara Khitai empire included subject tribes, such as the Qarluqs and at least till 1175 the Qangli and Naiman, and the subject kingdoms of Gaochang, the Eastern and Western Qarakhanids, and the Qarluq principality of Qayaliq, Almaliq and Pūlād. Khwārazm was a vassal state, but it never became an integral part of the empire.

#### The subject tribes

Very little is known about the administration of the tribes. The only definite information we have is that the tribal chiefs received tablets of authority and imperial seals to express their submission to the Qara Khitai, a very common Chinese practice, which was followed in Liao times and also under the Jin, Xi Xia and Yuan.[170]

Some insights regarding the Gürkhan's control of his subject tribes can be gleaned from the incident with the Qarluqs in 1163–4. At this date the Gürkhan ordered the Western Qarakhanids to drive out the Qarluqs from Samarqand to Kashgar, where they were supposed to engage in agriculture and refrain from taking up arms.[171] This incident implies that the Gürkhan considered himself capable of transferring segments of the tribal population within his realm and changing their mode of life, i.e., that the control over the tribes was quite firm. In the above-mentioned case, the Qarluqs of Transoxania were subdued by force rather than moved to Kashgar.[172] However, the Qarluq principality of Qayaliq, Almaliq and Pūlād, unattested before the time of the Qara Khitai,[173] probably manifests a successful implementation of the same policy, perhaps for the Qarluqs who had raided the Eastern Qarakhanids before the rise of the Qara Khitai.[174] The fact that Ong Khan's kinsmen understood his taking refuge with the Qara Khitai as renouncing his independence[175] also corroborates the notion that the Qara Khitai exercised firm control over their subject tribes. Güchülüg's marriage alliance with the Qara Khitai was only concluded towards the end of the dynasty,[176] so it is impossible to decide whether it reflects a common feature in Qara Khitai relations with their subject tribes.

Although there is no concrete information about the tribes' duties, it can be assumed that, like the subject kingdoms, the tribes were expected to give the Gürkhan military help (such as that expected from Güchülüg's kinsmen),[177] and that if they had to pay a certain tribute it would be mainly in livestock, as is evident in the Liao period[178] and implied by the generous gifts (but not tribute) that the White Tatars gave Dashi when he went through their realm on his way to Kedun.[179]

#### The subject kingdoms

The most prominent feature of Qara Khitai rule over its subject kingdoms was that it retained the local dynasties intact. Occasionally, however, the Qara Khitai replaced a hostile ruler with a more pliable one. They did so for the Western Qarakhanids after Qatwān,[180] for the Qarluqs in Qayaliq in the early thirteenth century,[181] and attempted to install Sulṭān Shāh in Khwārazm in the late 1170s after the latter's brother, Tekish, had killed their tax-collectors.[182] Only in the case of the Eastern

[166] Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule*, 10; N. Standen, "Alien Regimes and Mental States," *JESHO* 40 (1997), 84–5. Yet, the *Liao shi* treatise on the officials (*baiguan zhi*), in which equivalents of Western Liao titles were looked for, is sharply criticized for its inconsistency with Liao titles appearing in the histories of Song and Koryo or with the titles that appeared in Liao inscriptions. See M. Shimada, "The Characteristics of Northern Region Liao Bureaucracy and the Significance of the Hereditary Official System," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 41 (1983), 33–43. See the cases of the *tongzhi shumi yuan shi* and the *Liu yuan si da wang* mentioned above.

[167] See, e.g., note 163 above. WF's mention of a right vice-chancellor (used in *ZK*, 129–30 as a proof for the existence of a dual administration) is based upon erroneous punctuation of the text of *LS* 30 (WF, 665; *LS*, 30/357).

[168] As done by *XLSG*, 66–9; *ZK*, 130–1; JZA 1996, 63–9; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," *passim*. Cf. WF, 666; Li Xihou, "Lun Xi Liao de zhengzhi zhidu," *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* (1989), 75–80.

[169] *LS*, 45/685; Li Xihou, "Xi Liao," 80.

[170] *JS*, 121/2637; for tablets of authority under the Liao see, e.g., *LS*, 57/905; JZA 1996, 72. For later use of this method see, e.g., H. Yule (ed.), *The Book of Sir Marco Polo* (London, 1903), 1:14–15.

[171] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310–11; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "A'rāḍ," fol. 213a–214a. See ch. 2 for details.

[172] *Ibid.*

[173] J. A. Boyle, "Ḳayāliḳ," *EI2* 4 (1978), 808–9; W. Barthold (with B. Spuler and O. Pritsak), "Almaligh," *EI2* 1 (1960), 418–19.

[174] See p. 39 for details; cf. Pritsak, "Karachaniden," 43.

[175] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:274–5.

[176] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:334.

[177] Juwaynī, 1:46–7, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 63, 359.

[178] WF, 314–16. The Oghuz paid their taxes to Sanjar in livestock; see p. 140.

[179] *LS*, 30/355.

[180] Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 87.

[181] Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74–5.

[182] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378–80, and see ch. 2 for full references.

Qarakhanids, a part of whose domains was integrated into the central territory of the Qara Khitai and became its capital, did the conquerors downgrade the title of the local ruler (from Ilig Khan to Ilig Türkmen or Ilig Turkān), and relocate him, transferring him from Balāsāghūn to Kashgar.[183] Other subject rulers retained their original abode and titles, including that of Khan and Khaqan.[184] While retaining the local rulers in their places, the Qara Khitai might have attempted to limit their power by encouraging the fragmentation of their realms.[185] For example, a separate Qarakhanid branch ruling in Farghāna from Uzgand is attested only from 1137, after the first collision between the Qara Khitai and the Western Qarakhanids,[186] and numismatic evidence reveals the emergence of many new princely appanages in Farghāna and Transoxania in the second half of the twelfth century. Local Khans are found, apart from Samarqand and Uzgand, also in Kāsān, Marghīnān, Fanākit, Utrār, Balkh, Wakhsh and Tirmidh, and, apart from the last case, their coins bore only their names.[187] In the Eastern Qarakhanid realm, Juwaynī mentions in the early thirteenth century the Sultan of Khotan,[188] thereby attesting to a certain disintegration of Eastern Qarakhanid power between Khotan and Kashgar.

Another form of Qara Khitai involvement in their vassals' internal affairs was their willingness to support a pretender to a throne in return for a notable financial gain, as they did for Tekish in 1172.[189] Interestingly, the popularity of a candidate among his future subjects was seriously considered before he received Qara Khitai support: Sulṭān Shāh worked hard to prove his popularity in Khwārazm, and the *fuma*'s discovery of the latter's unpopularity there was among the reasons that led him to desert Sulṭān Shāh's cause.[190]

Like the tribal chiefs, the rulers subordinate to the Qara Khitai received silver tablets of authority, which they either hung at their waists or attached to their palace gates.[191] The Qara Khitai demanded that the rulers send a hostage to the Gürkhan's court, as attested in the cases of the Uighurs and the Eastern Qarakhanids.[192] At least in the case of the Western Qarakhanids, the ruler made periodic visits to Balāsāghūn,[193] although it is unclear whether these were obligatory or voluntary. Submission to the Gürkhan also included compliance with a certain set of

[183] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 355; Pritsak, "Karachaniden," 43. Cf. Chinggis Khan's response to the Qarluq submission in 1211, where the title of Arslan Khan was degraded to Arslan Sirtāqatī (i.e. Tajik): Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 38.

[184] E.g., the Western Qarakhanid rulers, called Khans on their coins (Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 22–3), and Khaqan in their inscriptions (A. I. Iakubovskij, "Dve nadpisi na severnom mavzolee 1152g v Uzgende," *EV* 1 [1947], 27–32).

[185] Karupkulov et al., *Istoriia*, 300. [186] Kochnev, "Chronologie," 66.

[187] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 33. [188] Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74.

[189] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 51; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:303; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 137. See pp. 84–5 for further examples.

[190] Juwaynī, 2:20, tr. Boyle, 292.

[191] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; "Alfī", fol. 32b; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 517; for the subject tribes see pp. 114–15 and n. 170 above.

[192] *LS*, 30/355; Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 65. Sending hostages was a common feature in Central Asian medieval history, and is well attested also among the Qara Khitai's neighbors, e.g. Khwārazm (Nasawī, *Sīra*, 94; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:572; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259; Juwaynī, 2:51, tr. Boyle, 318).

[193] Juwaynī, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 393.



"commands and prohibitions," whose content is unspecified.[194] The Qara Khitai confirmed the investiture of newly elected rulers, at least in the Western Qarakhanid and Qarluq cases.[195] Some of their subject rulers (at least in Transoxania, Gaochang and Qayaliq) also had to accommodate the permanent presence of the Gürkhan's commissioner (*shiḥna*).[196] The nomination of a new local commissioner seems to have accompanied the confirmation of a new subject ruler: When the Gürkhan appointed the son of the Khan of Qayaliq to replace his father, the Qara Khitai ruler sent a *shiḥna* to accompany him, although the father already had a *shiḥna*.[197] Sultan 'Uthmān of Samarqand was given a *shiḥna* after the Gürkhan confirmed his accession;[198] and the Gürkhan's last commissioner in Gaochang arrived there soon after the enthronement of the new Idi-qut, Barchuq Art Tegin.[199] Sometimes the nomination was related to the appointment of a new Gürkhan: After Zhilugu had been elected to the office he "sent *shiḥnas* to all parts."[200]

The Gürkhans concluded marriage alliances with their most respected subject rulers, but while they willingly received the daughters of the Khwārazm Shāh and the Western Qarakhanids,[201] they were less willing to give their daughters in marriage. Zhilugu's refusal in the early thirteenth century to marry his daughter to Sultan 'Uthmān of Samarqand, due to "the great difference between the two countries," aroused the latter's antagonism. But after the deterioration of the Gürkhan's position and 'Uthmān's intermezzo with the Khwārazm Shāh, he finally received a Qara Khitai princess.[202] The Khwārazm Shāh's anxiousness to marry a Qara Khitai princess around the same time also demonstrates the unique respect such a step implied.[203]

The main obligations of the subject rulers to their Qara Khitan lords were financial, i.e., paying taxes, though certain military obligations are also attested.

The subject kingdoms were allowed to keep their armies, but were required to mobilize them as auxiliary troops for the Gürkhan, as attested with regard to the Qarakhanids and the Qarluqs.[204] There is no record of asking military help from Khwārazm, whose army was far stronger than the others. This is either due to Khwārazm's lesser degree of submission or to the fact that in many of the cases in which military assistance was needed, Khwārazm was already involved, either as the enemy (in 1158) or as the initiator of the joint campaign (in 1203–4).[205]

The taxes of the subject territories were mainly paid in the form of an annual tribute, at least by Khwārazm, the Western Qarakhanids and Balkh.[206] Ibn

[194] *Ibid*. The only hint relating to the content of these "commands and prohibitions" is Ibn al-Athīr's assertion that the Gürkhan prohibited drinking but not adultery (Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86).

[195] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310; Juwaynī, 1:56, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 74–5, 393.

[196] *Ibid*. See below for full details and references, also for the case of Gaochang.

[197] Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74–5. [198] Juwaynī, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 393.

[199] *YS*, 122/3000. [200] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.

[201] Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 87; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 8/2:19.

[202] Juwaynī, 2:122, 124, tr. Boyle, 393, 395.

[203] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44; for more on marriage alliances see pp. 162–4.

[204] See the discussion and examples on pp. 149–51.

[205] See ch. 2 and pp. 65–8 for discussion and references.

[206] Juwaynī, 2:88, 122, tr. Boyle, 356, 393; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:134.

al-Athīr's assertion that each family had to pay one dinar to the Qara Khitai[207] could either have been the basis for the tribute's calculation or it could have referred only to the taxation of the central territory. The only concrete evidence about the composition and size of the tribute is from Khwārazm, whose annual payment in Atsïz's time was defined as the equivalent of 30,000 gold dinars which were paid in cattle and goods.[208] The Qara Khitai's demands from the Western Qarakhanids are described as including *amwāl* and *abshār*, i.e., property and people.[209] The demand of people might refer to corvée, a practice known both under the Western Qarakhanids and the Liao,[210] or to slaves. The Qara Khitai's need for manpower is corroborated by Jūzjānī's statement that in addition to the money they demanded, on several occasions the Qara Khitai captured Muslim prisoners from Transoxania, Farghāna, Khwārazm and parts of Khurāsān.[211]

The Western Qarakhanid annual tribute is described by Juwaynī as small,[212] and the general reputation of the Gürkhan's justice[213] suggests that the initial demands were quite moderate. In the dynasty's last years, however, the higher burden of taxes, mainly due to the local commissioners' abuse of their power, was among the main reasons for the alienation of the inhabitants of the subject territories from the Qara Khitai.[214]

The Qara Khitai taxes on their subject and vassal kingdoms were collected in one of three ways:[215]

1. By a representative of the Gürkhan permanently stationed in the subject kingdom (such representatives are attested at Samarqand, Qayaliq, Gaochang and in 1140s Bukhara).[216]
2. By emissaries of the Gürkhan who came annually to levy the taxes (Khwārazm).
3. By the local ruler of the city himself, who was responsible for transferring the taxes to either the Gürkhan's representative or to the Qara Khitai court at Balāsāghūn (Balkh, Bukhara).

The methods, however, could change over time. The most prominent example is Bukhara, where after Qatwān a representative of the Gürkhan was stationed, but whose local *ṣadr*s of the Burhān family later obtained the privilege of collecting the taxes for the Gürkhan.[217] Ibn al-Athīr implies that after Tekish brought about

[207] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; "Alfī," fol. 32b.
[208] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356 (where it is wrongly translated as 3,000).
[209] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259. [210] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 146–9; WF, 363–74.
[211] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:261. [212] Juwaynī, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 393.
[213] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; Juwaynī, 2:90, tr. Boyle, 358.
[214] See pp. 71, 84 for discussion and references.
[215] Barthold, *Studies*, 1:103–4, whence JZA 1996, 72; *ZK*, 131; Li Xihou, "Xi Liao," 79; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," 130; Xiao Aimin, "Xi Liao li guo ji qi yu Zhong Ya zhu shu guo de guanxi," *Beifang minzu wenhua* 12 (1991), 74.
[216] Juwaynī, 1:56 (Qayaliq), 2:122 (Samarqand), tr. Boyle, 74–5, 393; *YS*, 122/3000, 124/3049; *SWQZL*, 59a; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5b (Gaochang); Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5; Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh*, 25 (Bukhara).
[217] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24; Narshakhī, *Ta'rikh*, 25; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257, and see below for details.



the Gürkhan's defeat by the Ghūrids in 1198, the Gürkhan sent him the *fuma* who obliged Tekish to accept his sojourn,[218] i.e., tried to change the method of taxation. The *Simṭ al-'ulā*'s assertion that Baraq Ḥājib came to Khwārazm as a *basqaq*, a term (discussed below) that usually refers to a permanent representative in a conquered land, may also attest to the same intention.[219] The Qara Khitai representative in Gaochang is sometimes described as messenger,[220] and perhaps a permanent representative was stationed there not immediately after the Qara Khitan conquest, as stated by Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn,[221] but only "when the Qara Khitai became stronger," as implied by the *Yuan shi*.[222] No doubt, the first method of tax-gathering implies a firmer control over the territory than the second and the third.[223]

**The Gürkhan's representatives** The terminology for the Gürkhan's representatives in the vassal states varied, although most of the terms mentioned refer to the same office. In Chinese, the Qara Khitai's representative in Gaochang is called *shaojian* (lesser supervisor, vice-director).[224] This form is transcribed in Persian as ShWKM (Shawgäm), and appears several times in the Muslim sources.[225] Although they understood Shawgäm as a name, at least in the case of Gaochang, it was clearly identified with the office of *shiḥna*, the most common designation in the Muslim literature for the Gürkhan's representative.[226] In the seventeenth century Abū Ghāzī used the Mongol term *darugha* for the same office.[227] The Turkic equivalent of *shiḥna* and *darugha*, *basqaq*, is attested in the *Yuan shi* for the Qara Khitan commissioner in Kāsān (see central administration section), and in the *Simṭ al-'ulā*, but in relation to Khwārazm, where there was usually no permanent representative of the Gürkhan.[228] Other Muslim titles attached to the Gürkhan's officials are *nā'ib* (deputy, governor), which refers to city governors;[229] and *wālī*

[218] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137. Since Ibn al-Athīr's record of the events of 1198 is rather confused (see pp. 66–7 and n. 48), it is hard to know how trustful this information is. No permanent representative resided with Tekish's successor, Sultan Muḥammad.
[219] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22. [220] *YS*, 122/3046; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 229.
[221] Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 44; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338.
[222] *YS*, 124/3049; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5b.
[223] This is clearly shown, although in the tribal arena and outside the framework of the Qara Khitai empire, by the Oghuz case of 1147. Their submission to Sanjar obliged the Oghuz to pay an annual tax in livestock, which they gave to Sanjar's emissary who came annually to collect it. When *amīr* Qumāch decided to replace this custom by stationing among them a permanent commissioner (*shiḥna*, about which see below), the Oghuz rebelled claiming that they were subject only to Sanjar and therefore were not prepared to be governed by any of his representatives ("Alfī," fol. 44b; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 177–8; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 93).
[224] *YS*, 124/3049; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5a; *SWQZL*, 59a. For WF's definition of *jianguo* (regent, state supervisor) as another type of the Gürkhan's representative see below.
[225] Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 44; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:95 (Sankam); Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 93 (Shadkam); "Alfī," fol. 204b; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338.
[226] Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 44 and n. 4; "Alfī," fol. 204b; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 93; see also Juwaynī, 1:56, 2:89, 122, tr. Boyle, 74, 357, 393; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:268.
[227] Abū Ghāzī, Histoire, 93. [228] *YS*, 120/2969; Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22.
[229] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259.

(governor), as *Atmatigin in Bukhara is denoted.[230] Both *nā'ib* and *wālī* are common synonyms for *shiḥna* in the Saljūq and Mongol periods, i.e., before and after the period of the Qara Khitai.[231] The *shaojian* of Gaochang also bore the Chinese title of *taishi* (grand preceptor).[232]

What was the meaning of those terms? Before discussing the complex question of terminology, let us start by assembling the information about the functions of the *shiḥna/shaojian* in the Qara Khitan context.

The main function of the *shiḥna*, the Gürkhan's representative, was to supervise the collection of taxes,[233] while overseeing the local ruler.[234] The *shiḥna* could increase the financial demands on the city he supervised. In the days of Yelü Dashi and under an organized city leadership, the Gürkhan quickly cut short any oppressive demands,[235] but towards the end of the dynasty the *shiḥna*s' unreasonable demands and arrogant attitude were often a source of tension.[236] The *shiḥna* seemed to have subject officials that helped him collect the taxes. Juwaynī mentioned that in Transoxania there were, apart from the *shiḥna*, also tax-collectors (*muḥaṣṣilān-i māl*).[237] These were probably identical with at least one of the two other officials he described in Transoxania: revenue officials (*manṣūbān-i 'ummāl*) and local administrators (*muqalladān-i a 'māl*).[238] The tax-collectors were probably either officials subject to the *shiḥna* or messengers who brought ad hoc demands from the Gürkhan, and perhaps the distinct terms differentiate between these two categories. It is hard to determine whether the *nā'ib*s, whom according to Ibn al-Athīr the Qara Khitai stationed in each city, were the *shiḥna*s themselves or their subject officials.[239]

At least in the case of Bukhara, where *Atmatigin rebuilt the city walls and citadel,[240] the office also included a military function, mainly a defensive one. The *shiḥna*, however, did not have a permanent force stationed with him, as proved by the fact that whenever a Qara Khitai army was needed, troops were sent from the Gürkhan's (or Tayangu's) headquarters, and not supplied by their local governors.[241] This can perhaps explain why in the extant communications between the local rulers and the Gürkhan, e.g., when the Western Qarakhanids asked for military help in 1158[242] there is no indication of the involvement of a *shiḥna*, and the rulers turned directly to the Gürkhan. This remains true even when non-military subjects (e.g., marriage alliance) were at stake.[243] The *shiḥna*, however, was a symbol of submission to the Gürkhan and his murder therefore a manifestation of changing loyalties.[244]

How does this description fit in with what we know about the terms *shiḥna* and *shaojian* in the pre- and post-Qara Khitai periods? *Shiḥna* was quite a common title in the Saljūq administration. It designated the military governor of a town, area or district, appointed by the sultan or his governor, whose main function was to ensure the maintenance of order and the undisturbed collection of taxes. The term is often translated as the head of police.[245] Yet *shiḥna* also designated the representative of the Saljūq central administration among tribal groups, responsible for the maintenance of order, the collection of taxes and the allocation of pasture and water to the different tribal leaders.[246]

In the early Mongol period *shiḥna* was often a synonym of *darugha* and *basqaq*,[247] all designating a commissioner of the central government who oversaw the administration of towns and their surrounding districts or of various social groupings such as craftsmen.[248] The development of the *shiḥna* from the head of the police to the commissioner of the central government must have taken place in the Qara Khitai period, and perhaps derived from the Saljūq office of the tribal *shiḥna*.[249] It is obvious that for Juwaynī at least a Mongol *shiḥna* is equal to a Qara Khitai one. Yet Juwaynī used the same term for a Khwārazmian office which would be expected to follow Saljūq practice, namely for the commissioner that Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh sent to Samarqand after his deposition of Sultan 'Uthmān.[250] In this context the evidence of Ibn al-Athīr is significant. Speaking about the same Khwārazmian commissioner he says that Khwārazm Shāh had sent a *shiḥna* to Samarqand following the custom of the Qara Khitai (*'alā mā kāna rasm*

[230] Narshakhī, *Ta'rīkh*, 25.
[231] Lambton, *Continuity*, 354, 102; A. K. S. Lambton, "Shiḥna," *EI2* 9 (1997): 437–8. In the fourteenth-century hexaglot dictionary, the terms *shiḥna*, *basqaq*, *darugha* and Arabic *amīr al-balad* (lit. "commander of the city") appear as synonyms: P. B. Golden (ed.), *The King's Dictionary: The Rasūlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian and Mongol* (Leiden, 2000), 202.
[232] *YS*, 124/3049; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5a.
[233] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338; Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 44.
[234] *SWQZL*, 59a; Juwaynī, 1:56, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 74, 393; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24.
[235] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5.
[236] See, e.g., Juwaynī, 1:32, 56, tr. Boyle, 44, 75 and see pp. 71, 84 for full references.
[237] Juwaynī, 2:123, tr. Boyle, 393. [238] Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 358.
[239] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; see also Ibn al-Athīr, 12:267–8 where Khwārazm Shāh, acting according to the Qara Khitan customs, sent *nā'ib*s to every conquered city in Transoxania and a *shiḥna* to Samarqand where Sultan 'Uthmān, the nominal ruler of Transoxania, was stationed.
[240] Narshakhī, *Ta'rīkh*, 25. [241] WF, 666–7; cf. Li Xihou, "Xi Liao," 80.

[242] Juwaynī, 2:14–15, tr. Boyle, 288. [243] Juwaynī, 2:122, tr. Boyle, 393.
[244] Juwaynī, 1:32, 56, tr. Boyle, 44, 75; WF, 667; see D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (London, 1986), 109 for the same "function" of the Mongol *shiḥna*.
[245] J. Paul, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit* (Beirut, 1996), 94–6; H. Horst, *Die Staatsverwaltung der Grosselgūqen und Ḫorazmshāhs 1038–1231* (Wiesbaden, 1964), 93–4, 159–60; Lambton, "Shiḥna," 437–8.
[246] A. K. S. Lambton, "The Internal Structure of the Saljūq Empire," in *CHI5*, 244–6; Lambton, "Shiḥna," 437–8; Lambton, *Continuity*, 362.
[247] Lambton, *Continuity*, 362; Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule*, 18–19; Morgan, *Mongols*, 109.
[248] Lambton, "Shiḥna," 437–8. In later Ilkhanid times (e.g., by the time of Ghazan [r. 1295–1304]), there was certainly a differentiation between *shiḥna* and *basqaq*, although the exact differences between the two posts are still unclear (*ibid.*). Compare Lambton, *Continuity*, 255, according to which in the Ilkhanate the *shiḥna* was a military governor and the *basqaq* a provincial revenue officer, with D. Ostrowski, "The *tamma* and the Dual Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61 (1998), *passim*, referring to the united Mongol empire, who reached exactly the opposite conclusions. See also D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), 36–40. Cf. the fourteenth-century Rasūlid hexaglot, in which the two terms are synonyms (Golden, *King's Dictionary*, 202).
[249] Cf. I. Vasary, "The Origins of the Institution of Basqaqs," *Acta Orientalia* 32 (1978), 205.
[250] Juwaynī, 2:81, tr. Boyle, 349; Horst, *Staatsverwaltung*, 92–4, 159–60.

*al-Khitā*).[251] Thus, the Khwārazmian office was a continuation of the Qara Khitan one, and the important role of the Khwārazmians in Mongol administration[252] suggests that Khwārazm was another channel through which the *shiḥna* became an office prevalent in the Mongol empire.

The Chinese equivalent of the *shiḥna*, the *shaojian*, is an even more problematic term.[253] In the Liao period (and afterwards), it designated a second-tier executive official of various agencies, usually held by the rank of *jian* (director, supervisor) or *taijian* (grand director).[254] It does not occur very often in the *Liao shi*, and only once is it vaguely connected with provincial administration.[255] Moreover, *shaojian* is a relatively minor title, which implies the existence of a higher authority. Wittfogel and Feng therefore suggested that above the *shaojian* stood the *jianguo* (supervisor of the state, a regent).[256] This compound appears in two references to the Uighur rebellion of 1209.[257] However, unlike *shaojian*, *jianguo* has no equivalent in the Muslim sources. Moreover, the many other references to the Uighur rebellion emphasize the murder of the *shaojian/shiḥna*, and do not suggest that there was anybody above him or that there was more than one Qara Khitai representative at Gaochang.[258] It is, therefore, more plausible that in the two cases mentioned above the compound *jianguo* actually serves as a verb+object which describes the function of the Gürkhan's official (i.e. the *shiḥna*) and not as an independent title.[259] Indeed, this is how the episode is understood in recent Chinese and Western secondary literature.[260]

[251] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:267–8.

[252] See, e.g., T. T. Allsen, "Mahmud Yalavach, Mas'ūd Beg, 'Alī Beg, Safaliq, Bujir," in *In the Service of the Khan*, 122–35.

[253] Pelliot's suggestion, that *shiḥna*'s plural, *shiḥnigan*, is actually a Persian transliteration of Chinese *shaojian* (WF, 666), was completely refuted by Doerfer (Doerfer, *Elemente*, 3:321).

[254] Hucker, *Dictionary*, 414/5089, 476/6149; see also D. M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule – A Reference Guide* (Stuttgart, 1990), 23.

[255] The term *shaojian* appears thirteen times in the *Liao shi*, mostly in connection with the directorate of the palace building (*jiangzuo jian*) (*LS*, 17/199, 20/238, 47/787, 98/1415, 102/1440); the directorate of the imperial manufactories (*shaofu jian*) (*LS*, 29/344, 47/789, 97/1409, 98/1416, 102/1441) or the directorate of the imperial treasury (*taifu jian*) (*LS*, 47/789, 797), all of them directorates of the southern administration. Only in one case was the *jiangzuo shaojian* (junior director for palace building) sent as a *lashi* (prefect) to Dongzhou or Kangzhou, after the emperor became angry with him (*LS*, 17/199, 80/1277).

[256] WF, 666; see also Hucker, *Dictionary*, 149/840, where it is mentioned as appearing usually as a verb+object (VO) compound, not as an exact title.

[257] *SWQZL*, 59a; *YS*, 122/3000.

[258] Juwaynī, 1:32, tr. Boyle, 44–45; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338–9; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 5/11a; *YS*, 124/3046, 3049; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 93; "Alfī," fol. 204a.

[259] On the use of *jianguo* as a VO compound (to supervise the country, to serve as a regent), not as a title see, e.g., *YS*, 146/3456, 128/3130, 149/3513, 175/4086, 186/4274. The title appears only once in the *Liao shi*, when after his conquests among the Zubu, Dangxiang and Tukui, Abaoji proclaimed the heir apparent as *jianguo* (*LS*, 1/19).

[260] See, e.g., Tu Ji, *Mengwuer*, 45/1b–2a; Zhu Yaoting, *Chengjisihan*, 259; Luo Xianyou, "Yuan dai Weiwuer Yidihu pusi ji qi diwei bianyu," *Minzu yanjiu* 2 (1997), 71; Allsen, "Uighurs," 246; Buell, "Early Mongol Expansion," 10, in which the *SWQZL*'s paragraph is thus translated. The sentence reads: *Sui [Idiqut] sha Qidan suo zhi jian guo shaojian, [yu lai yi he]*. In the second reference the VO interpretation is, however, less obvious. The sentence reads: *[Idiqut] wen Taizu [Chinggis] xing shuofang, sui sha Qidan suo zhi jian guo deng guan, yu lai fu*. Cf. Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," 131; JZA 1996, 71–2; *ZK*, 131.



Ostrowski's recent suggestion that the ShWKM of the Muslim sources is actually a transliteration not of a *shaojian* but of *shouzhun* (which he translated to civilian governor of a province)[261] ignores the important fact that *shouzhun* does not appear in any of the Chinese sources dealing with the Western Liao, while *shaojian* does. Unlike *shiḥna* and *basqaq*, *shaojian* does not occur in Mongol sources as designating a provincial commissioner. Yet the *shaojian*'s title *taishi* (grand preceptor) appears as designating the *basqaq*, or the greatest *shiḥna* of Mongol Bukhara, the (eastern) Khitan Yelü Ahai and his son Yelü Miansige, in the first half of the thirteenth century.[262] It seems logical that the Mongols would choose to use a title that, unlike the *shaojian*, does not have a connotation of a second tier.

**The Gürkhan's emissaries** The turbulent relationship between the Qara Khitai and Khwārazm provides us with some information about the character of the relations between the Gürkhan emissaries and their vassals. The emissaries were usually headed by a Khitan of noble origin, a relative of the Gürkhan[263] or a high official in the central administration, such as Mamḥūd Tai, Zhilugu's vizier.[264] The head emissary, usually a military commander,[265] was accompanied by a delegation, about whose size Tekish often complained.[266] The emissaries defined the required sum of the tribute, often going beyond what was agreed upon according to the Khwārazmian complaints.[267] The visit included a certain outward manifestation of Khwārazm's submission, which was rather painful for the Khwārazm Shāh. One of his main grievances, for example, was that the emissary of the Qara Khitai chose to sit with him on the same throne.[268] Here too, killing the emissaries, not an uncommon phenomenon, was a manifestation of freedom from the Gürkhan's yoke.[269] But while several emissaries to Khwārazm ended their careers floating in the Jaxartes, others found refuge there. A notable example is that of Baraq Ḥājib

[261] Ostrowski, "*Tamma*," 274. He gives no characters. The standard works (e.g. Hucker, Farquhar) contain no equivalent of *shouzhun* or *taishouzhun*.

[262] Buell, "Sino-Khitan Administration," 123; P. D. Buell, "Yeh-lü A-hai, Yeh-lü T'u-hua," in *In the Service of the Khan*, 112–21. *Taishi* is attested in *Chang Chun* (e.g., 1/26a; 1/40a), and Juwaynī's Tousha or Tamsha are probably transcriptions of this title (Juwaynī, 1:83–4, 87, tr. Boyle, 107, 111). Ostrowski's recent suggestion, that the *tousha* represents *taishou* (civilian governor of a province) again ignores the fact that the latter title does not appear in the Chinese sources which deal with the early Mongol empire (e.g., *Chang Chun* mentioned above). Ostrowski ruled out *taishi*, saying that grand preceptor is far too important a title for a provincial commissioner (Ostrowski, "*Tamma*," 274–5). Yet in the Liao administration, *taishi* was a very common designation, appearing eighty-five times in the *Liao shi*, and was related, e.g., to the administrations of the heir apparent, the imperial maternal uncles, the northern and southern divisions, the Yao Lian, the Five Cemeteries, the different tribes and several subordinated states (see, e.g., WF, 383, 428, 446, 472, 475, 478, 479, 480, 484, 487, 548, 549, 582).

[263] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; "Alfī," fol. 95a; Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22.

[264] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.

[265] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22; Juwaynī, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 476.

[266] "Alfī," fol. 95a.

[267] "Alfī," fol. 198a.

[268] Juwaynī, 2:19, 75, tr. Boyle, 292, 342; "Alfī," fol. 198a.

[269] Juwaynī, 2:19, tr. Boyle, 292; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 167a; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 137.

and his brother, whose administrative and military skills were certainly appreciated by the Khwārazm Shāh.[270]

**The local authorities** There are at least two examples of a situation in which local authorities themselves collected the taxes and sent them to the Gürkhan or his representatives. In Balkh, held by the Qara Khitai from 1165 to 1198, the local Turkic ruler, named *AZYA, was responsible for giving the money to "the Khitā in Transoxania,"[271] i.e., probably to the Gürkhan's representative in Tirmidh, to which Balkh was at least partially subject,[272] or in Samarqand, to which Tirmidh was subject.[273] A special situation was also apparent in Bukhara, where the famous Burhān family, heads of the Muslim Ḥanafī school who led the city from the early twelfth century, served as the Gürkhan's appointees.[274] Even when the Gürkhan held a permanent representative in Bukhara, the latter was asked to work in close cooperation with the Burhānid *ṣadr*s.[275] It is unclear when and why the Gürkhan's commissioner left Bukhara, but at least in 1206 Ibn al-Athīr explicitly states that the Burhānid *ṣadr* actually ruled the city for the Qara Khitai and was responsible for collecting their taxes. The enormous fortune accumulated by this *ṣadr* at that date, as well as Rāwandī's assertion about the close connection between the Gürkhans and the Burhānid *ṣadr*s, imply that this relationship began long before the early thirteenth century.[276]

Despite their close relationship with the Gürkhan and their holding of his tablet of authority (*paizah*),[277] the *ṣadr*s were first of all subjects of the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand.[278] It is therefore unclear whether the Burhānid *ṣadr*s transferred the Bukharan taxes to the Qarakhanids in Samarqand or to the Gürkhan in Quz Ordo, but at least in 1207, when their position in Bukhara was threatened by the rebellion of Malik Sanjar, the *ṣadr*s went all the way to Balāsāghūn to ask for the Gürkhan's help[279] – in other words, they had a certain direct connection to the Qara Khitai. If indeed the Burhānids took the taxes to the Gürkhan, then a possible explanation for this special situation in Bukhara (and Balkh) is that it was a step the Qara Khitai took in order to limit the power of the Western Qarakhanids of Samarqand by creating an alternative channel of communication between the Gürkhan and his

[270] E.g., Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22; Juwaynī, 2:211, tr. Boyle, 476 ff.; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 195; see pp. 87–9.
[271] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:134. [272] Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 372.
[273] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32.
[274] For the history of the Burhān family see Pritsak, "Āl-i Burhān"; C. E. Bosworth, "Ṣadr in Transoxania," *EI2* 8 (1994), 748–9; C. E. Bosworth, "Āl-e Borhān", *EIr* 1(1985), 753–4; see also p. 184.
[275] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24–5. *Ṣadr*, literally chest, hence eminent person, denoted a religious leader who also held political and administrative power at the city level. His authority was quite similar to that of a town *ra'īs* in the more western Islamic world (Bosworth, "Ṣadr," 748–9).
[276] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 18.
[277] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 517 (cf. Browne's edition, 2:384–5); Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 18.
[278] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 146–9; Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32–3; Kochnev, "Sadrov," *passim*.
[279] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 517.



subjects.[280] The method had the additional benefit of gaining the support of the city dwellers, who were allowed to continue their former way of life.[281]

### Centralism versus decentralism: the question of double vassalage

The degree of centralism that existed in the central territory of the Qara Khitai owed much to Yelü Dashi's unique personality. The various institutional means of centralization, such as the elevated position of the Gürkhan-emperor, the nomination of successors and the non-allocation of appanages were instrumental in preserving the dynasty after the death of its founder. They did not, however, manage to check the rise of decentralizing tendencies towards the end of the dynasty, a phenomenon that certainly was not unique to the Qara Khitai.

But while centralism in the central territory can be debated,[282] it is apparent that the administration of the subject kingdoms was highly decentralized. This is explicitly stated by Ibn al-Athīr, who said that the Qara Khitai conquerors did not change a thing in their subjects' lives, satisfying themselves with modest financial demands.[283] The loose notion of sovereignty in the subject territories was also expressed by the fact that no permanent Qara Khitan garrison was stationed in their lands. The Qara Khitan presence in those lands was mimimal, a fact that explains why visitors in Transoxania and Khwārazm such as Benjamin of Tudela, al-Gharnāṭī, or al-Sam'ānī ignore their overlordship completely.[284]

Another expression of this loose notion of sovereignty was the "double vassalage" employed by several Qara Khitai subject rulers. Both Atsïz Khwārazm Shāh (r. 1127/8–57) and the Western Qarakhanids retained a certain amount of vassalage to the Saljūq sultan Sanjar even after their surrender to the Qara Khitai in 1141–2. Sanjar's 1143 siege of Khwārazm compelled Atsïz to renew his vassalage to the Saljūqs (which he broke in 1141 following Sanjar's defeat at Qatwān). Despite that, as long as he lived Atsïz continued to pay his tribute to the Qara Khitai.[285] Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn, the Western Qarakhanid ruler (1141–56), who owed his throne to the Qara Khitai, expressed his submission to Sanjar on his coins in 1148.[286] Later on, the Western Qarakhanids retained a certain submission to the 'Abbāsid Caliphs, expressed in their inscriptions if not on their coins.[287] In 1144 the Uighurs of Gaochang came to pay tribute to the Jin, although before that and later on they were certainly subject to the Qara Khitai.[288] In each of those cases it is unclear whether the double vassalage was also expressed in double financial obligations (i.e., whether the vassals paid tribute not only to the Qara Khitai but

[280] Karupkulov et al., *Istoriia*, 300.
[281] Exemplified, e.g., in the Bukharan opposition to the Khwārazm Shāh's attack of 1182. See p. 61.
[282] E.g., *XLSG*, 72; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," 128; JZA 1996, 70.
[283] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. [284] WF, 667; see pp. 187–9.
[285] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:95–6; Juwaynī, 2:7–8, tr. Boyle, 280–1; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 243a. See ch. 2.
[286] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31. See ch. 2.
[287] "Iakubovskij, Dve nadpisi," 29. See p. 183. [288] *JS*, 121/2637.

also to their other lords; the Uighurs' tribute was probably only a commercial exchange). In the two first cases the double vassalage might have been facilitated by Qara Khitai demands of submission that were different from the requisites of vassalage in the Muslim world, i.e., the mentioning of the overlord on the vassal's coins (*sikka*) and during the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*) in the mosque. While the Qara Khitai did not demand that their subject rulers acknowledge their authority on the coinage, they quite rapidly came to understand the importance of this measure. This is perhaps the reason not only for the disappearance of Sanjar's name from Ibrāhīm's later coins, but also for the fact that the only published coins to bear the title Gürkhan before the name of the Western Qarakhanid Khan appeared in Ibrāhīm's realm.[289]

The meager information about the Qara Khitai does not allow us to exclude completely the possibility that instead of double vassalage the cases mentioned above represent an occasional severing of the vassalage to the Qara Khitai by their subject kingdoms. Yet the phenomenon of double vassalage was common in other Inner Asian empires, e.g., the Uighur empire (744–840) or Qaidu's Mongol state in Central Asia,[290] as well as in the Gaochang Uighurs and the Eastern Qarakhanids' relations with the Song and the Liao.[291] Thus, I suggest that it applies to the Qara Khitai case as well.

### *Ethnic and religious affiliation of the Gürkhan's officials*

Multi-ethnic administration characterized the Qara Khitai empire, in which the conquerors were a minority in their heterogeneous empire and therefore had to use the skills of their subjects.

While most of the core offices in the Qara Khitai central territory were held by Khitans of Yelü or Xiao origins, talented individuals of diverse origins and beliefs could also participate in the highest echelons of the administration, as proved by the Chinese (or Bohai) assistant to the prime minister Li Shichang,[292] the vizier Mamḥūd Tai, a Muslim merchant,[293] the Muslim judge (*qāḍī*) Shams al-Dīn Manṣūr b. Maḥmūd al-Uzgandī, the court doctor,[294] and Hala Yihachi Beilu (*Qara Jighach Buiruq) the Uighur tutor of the Gürkhan's children.[295]

At the provincial and local level, while Qara Khitai emissaries to Khwārazm were often from the Khitan royal family, their commissioners in the subject territories came from the subjects' ranks and professed the prevalent religious belief of the respective territory: Iṣfahānī stated that the governors of the "infidels" (Qara Khitai) in the Muslim lands were Muslims,[296] and indeed Ismāʿīl, the *basqaq* of Kāsān, was a Muslim from Balāsāghūn,[297] and *Atmatigin, the governor of Bukhara, was a noble Muslim Turk, a relative of the Khwārazm Shāh.[298] The *shaojian* of the Uighurs was a Buddhist monk,[299] befitting Gaochang's Buddhist population.

The Qara Khitai thus preferred to assign local officials who would not be in apparent conflict with the subject population. The use of local rulers as officials (as in the case of the Bukharan *ṣadr*s) certainly continued this tendency.[300]

### *The language of the administration*

The Qara Khitai empire was certainly a multilingual one. The Chinese characters on Western Liao coins, Chinese reign titles and the various Chinese titles, some of them attested also in Muslim sources, emphasize the importance of the Chinese language in the Western Liao's administration.[301] Ibn al-Athīr's views on the origin of the title Gürkhan (*Kukhān*) is significant in this context. According to him, "Kū in Chinese is the designation of their greatest king. Khān is the designation of the Turkic kings, [also] meaning the greatest king."[302] Although none of the proposed etymologies for the first element of the word Gürkhan suggests a Chinese origin,[303] the reference implies that Ibn al-Athīr thought that the Qara Khitai spoke Chinese (and Turkic), or at least used Chinese terminology. Yet one wonders whether Ibn al-Athīr could have distinguished between Chinese and Khitan. The same question is relevant in regard to the *Jahān nāmah*'s explicit assertion that the Qara Khitai used the Khitan language.[304] The use of Khitan in the Qara Khitai domains is, however, apparent also in Chinese sources, which certainly distinguished between the two languages. The Western Liao administrative title *tulu* was a Khitan title,[305] as was the honorable title *shali* (court noble).[306] Chang Chun reported that he had found in western Mongolia a tile inscribed with Khitan characters which he attributed to the Qara Khitai,[307] and Yelü Chucai recorded that he had learned the Khitan script from Li Shichang, the Chinese (or Bohai) assistant to the prime minister of the last Gürkhan.[308] The fluency of that non-Khitan in Khitan suggests the importance of the Khitan language in the Qara Khitai administration.[309]

[289] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31. (The title appears on two Samarqandi dirhams dated 1153/4 and 1154/5. See ch. 2.)
[290] C. Mackerras, "The Uighurs," in *CHEIA*, 328; Biran, *Qaidu*, 100.
[291] Zhang Yu, "Caoyuan Sichou zhilu," 114. [292] YLCC-*ZR*, 2/32, 7/153, 8/171.
[293] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357. [294] ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 155. [295] *YS*, 124/3046.
[296] Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, 278; Bundārī, *Zubdat al-nuṣra*, 255.



[297] *YS*, 120/2969. [298] Narshakhī, *Taʾrīkh*, 25.
[299] Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai wenji*, 11/5a; *YS*, 124/3049.
[300] This is in sharp contrast to the Mongol multi-ethnic administration, in which the Mongols preferred to assign non-local governors (Khwārazmians to China and [eastern] Khitans to Bukhara) in order to check the power of their local cadres.
[301] See the introduction to this chapter and tables 1–3 in the appendix.
[302] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83. [303] See pp. 38–91.
[304] Bakrān, *Jahān nāmah*, 72. [305] *LS*, 30/357.
[306] *LS*, 30/358. In *LS* 116/1534, the title is equated with the Chinese term *langjun* ("court noble"). WF, 646, n. 15.
[307] *Chang Chun*, 1/19a; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 68.
[308] YLCC-*ZR*, 8/171; WF, 670; *XLSYJ*, 188; see also Jiang Weilu, "Liao chao yu Xi Liao chao de bei, yin," *Yili shifan xueyuan xuebao* 2001/4, 63–5.
[309] WF, 670.

Qara Khitai correspondence with the Muslims of Transoxania was written in Persian and used Muslim formulas.[310] Tayangu of Talas must have known enough Persian to appreciate Persian panegyrics written for him.[311] A few Arabo-Persian and Turkic titles are attested in the Qara Khitai administration, and the nomination of an Uighur as an instructor to the Qara Khitai princes suggests that Uighur Turkic might have been one of the administration's languages.[312]

This complex linguistic situation only partially reflects the many languages prevailing in Central Asia before and during Qara Khitan times: According to Kāshgarī, half a century before the Qara Khitai arrived in Central Asia, the population of Balāsāghūn, Talas and Isfījāb spoke both Turkic and Soghdian.[313] Twelfth- and early thirteenth-century tomb inscriptions from Balāsāghūn reveal that Turkic, in both Uighur and Arabic scripts, Persian and (grammatically poor) Arabic were in use in the Qara Khitai central territory.[314] The Nestorian epitaphs unearthed in the central territory of the Qara Khitai attest to the use of Syriac there as well.[315]

## Conclusion

Before evaluating the importance of Chinese features in the Qara Khitai system of government, I should briefly point out two methodological problems. The first, and most apparent, is that the information evaluated is meager and sketchy, and therefore open to differing interpretations. The second is that the definition of Chinese features or of China itself in the twelfth century is not at all obvious. Whether one chooses to define China ethnically, geographically or culturally, the borders of this entity are not clear-cut, as argued in the first part of this chapter. Throughout the work, I have presupposed that the northern Chinese tradition, to which the Liao (and also Jin, Yuan and Qing) belonged, is an integral part of the notion of China. Of course, comparing the Western Liao not with the Liao but with the southern tradition of the Song would result in different conclusions.[316]

In this context one should also note the official answer of the People's Republic of China to the question of "what was China," not only because it is the only definite one available, but also because it has certain implications for a modern Chinese assessment of the Qara Khitai. This definition is based on the contemporary political boundaries of China, i.e., the history of each region or nationality

[310] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 25; WF, 670; *XLSYJ*, 188.
[311] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 155–6.
[312] *YS*, 124/3046; WF, 670; *XLSYJ*, 188.
[313] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:84 (art. 25).
[314] V. V. Nastits, "K epigraficheskoi istorii Balasaghuna," in *Krasnaia Rechka i Burana* (Frunze, 1989), 58–77; Nastits, "Burana."
[315] D. Chwolson, "Syrische Grabinschriften aus Semirjetschie," *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Petersbourg* 34 (1886), 1–30, 37 (1890), 1–22; F. Nau, "Les pierres tombales nestoriennes du musée Guimet," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 8 (1913), 3–35; E. C. D. Hunter, "Syrian Christianity in Central Asia," *Zeitschrift für Religions und Geistesgeschichte* 44 (1992), 366–7; Barthold, *Türken*, 127; Barthold, *Studies*, 1:106.
[316] Cf. WF, 668.



that is today included in the territory of the PRC is part of Chinese history.[317] This concept not only accepts the Liao as a Chinese dynasty, it also locates the Qara Khitai firmly within the span of Chinese history, due to their rule in the region of modern Xinjiang. This assumption, combined with the delicate political position of Xinjiang in the PRC, has brought several modern Chinese studies to overemphasize the Chineseness of the Qara Khitai, arbitrarily ascribing to them Liao customs and methods, and finding questionable Chinese precedents for their peculiarities.[318]

To illustrate those problems, let us take the example of the main feature of Qara Khitai administration, the differentiation between the administration of the central territory, under the direct rule of the Gürkhan, and that of the vast areas of semi-independent subject kingdoms and tribes surrounding it, a phenomenon which is certainly not characteristic of China (either under Tang, Song or Liao). Indeed, one can find certain precedents for such a situation in Liao times, but to a much lesser degree. The Liao gave a temporary status of tributary states to both the Bohai and the Xi soon after their subjugation, but when the opportunity arose they did integrate them into the Liao realm.[319] The Wuguo (Five Nations) tribe was the only one which continued to give tribute (i.e., not regular taxes) throughout the Liao's reign.[320] Modern Chinese writers, however, trace the Western Liao's handling of its subject territories to the Tang model of "loose rein" (*jimi*).[321]

The *jimi* was indeed a form of indirect and decentralized rule, but the differences between the *jimi* and the Qara Khitai government are no smaller than the similarities. There is no evidence for the assigning of the characteristic *jimi* administrative divisions of prefectures and districts in Western Liao subject territories and, more important, there were no garrisons stationed in those territories, an element which was a central component in the *jimi* model. Certainly the economic importance of the Qara Khitai subject territories to the empire was greater than that of the *jimi* regions to the Tang.[322]

Moreover, with the same (small) amount of accuracy one could claim that the Qara Khitai followed the Saljūq model. In the Saljūq empire many settled areas continued to be administered by former local ruling families, and the majority of their tribal areas continued to tender primary allegiance to their local chiefs.[323]

[317] See, e.g., Bao Erhan et al. (eds.), "Zonglun: Minzu he minzu wenti," in Bao Erhan et al. (eds.), *Minzu*, in *Zhongguo da bai ke quanshu* (Beijing, 1989), 1–5.
[318] For an obvious example see, e.g., Xue Zongzheng et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo Xinjiang gudai shehui shenghuo shi* (Urumchi, 1997), 400–29. See also *XLSG*, 66–9; JZA 1996, 63–9; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," *passim*; Chen Jiahua et al., *Song Liao Jin shiqi minzu shi* (Sichuan, 1996), 66–71; Yu Taishan (ed.), *Xiyu tongshi* (Zhongzhou, 1996), 302–22.
[319] Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 66, 69, 97–8.
[320] WF, 407–8.
[321] JZA 1996, 75; *XLSG*, 75–6; Feng Jiqin, "Xi Liao," 131; and, less categorically, Xiao Aimin, "Xi Liao," 72–5.
[322] For Tang *jimi* see Pan Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbors* (Bellingham, 1997), 197–203; Lin Chaomin, "*Jimi fuzhou* yu Tang dai minzu guanxi," *Sixiang zhanxian* 1985/5, 49–58.
[323] C. L. Klausner, *The Seljuq Vezirate: A Study of Civil Administration 1055–1194* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), 10–11.

The obvious reservation here is that unlike the Saljūqs, the Qara Khitai did not allocate lands to members of the royal family or to officers. The Qara Khitai specific form of rule is nonetheless related to the geographical characteristics of its territories, which were not brought under centralized rule until the modern period. It is, however, true that the symbols of subordination (tables of authority; acknowledgment of superiority) follow Chinese patterns of subordination and are certainly different from the Muslim requirements of *khuṭba* and *sikka*.

After stressing the elusive character of models and leaving the PRC's political arguments aside, let us return to the Qara Khitai administration as described above. First, there is no conclusive indication that the Qara Khitai retained the peculiarities of Liao administration such as the dual administration or the multi-capital system. Furthermore, it is highly significant that the two most prestigious and characteristic titles of the Qara Khitai, Gürkhan and *tayangu*, both Inner Asian and *not* Chinese, do not have a precedent in the Liao realm.[324]

Moreover, there is no conclusive indication of the functioning of a Chinese-style bureaucracy. Although the existence of a *shumi yuan* is tentatively attested, its functions are nowhere specified. Furthermore, the recorded Chinese titles mostly originated in the Liao northern administration, i.e., they originally reflected a Khitan–Inner Asian organization and not a Chinese one. The Inner Asian character of the administration is manifested by the personal relationship between the ruler and his officials; the importance of the ruler's personal retinue; the dominance of military positions; and the overlapping of civil and military duties.

Within the limits of the sources, what is evident about Western Liao administration is its Inner Asian character. Furthermore, the administration reflects not only Khitan roots but also other Turkic-Altaic influences (suggested by the titles Gürkhan and *tayangu*), whose specific sources are hard to detect, as well as a certain influence of the Muslim Central Asian administrative tradition (e.g., the titles vizier and *shiḥna*, the use of Persian). The two last-mentioned segments (Inner Asian and Muslim) reflect the influence of the new Central Asian environment on the Western Liao's rule.

It is, however, significant that most of the officials in this Inner Asian administration bore Chinese titles. Indeed, Chinese influence is apparent at least in two fields, though in both it was not exclusive. First, the language, whose legitimizing function was stressed in the first part of the chapter; and second, the symbols of rulership (i.e., the position of the emperors, reign titles) and of vassalage (e.g., tablets of authority; acknowledging Western Liao supremacy in certain rites; tribute). Those symbols were known to Inner Asian peoples through many years of interaction with China. The extended practice of those symbols under the Western Liao in comparison to earlier Inner Asian conquerors was certainly connected to the Khitans' intimate acquaintance with the Chinese imperial tradition achieved during the Liao period.

[324] This despite the fact that the Liao also used Turkic titles. Yet those were mainly limited to low-level positions. See WF, 442.



Qara Khitai state organization shared many characteristics with that of the Liao and the other northern Chinese dynasties. Like the northern Chinese empires, the Western Liao one was multi-ethnic, multilingual, based on the strong personal power of the ruler, employed a huge military machine, had a lesser notion of sovereignty, and was ruled by a minority group that preserved its own particular identity. Yet those elements reflect exactly the strong Inner Asian influence apparent in the northern dynasties.[325]

A few conclusions can be drawn from the discussion and the information reviewed above. In eleventh–twelfth-century Central Asia, China, though vaguely known, was closely linked to notions of grandeur and prestige, and the memory of former Chinese sovereignty in the region was still alive. This situation was an important motive for maintaining Chinese features in the Western Liao realm. This proves that Chinese trappings and concepts could be adopted not only for ruling Chinese in Chinese territories but whenever they contributed to the ruling stratum's legitimization and sense of identity or to the stability of its rule.

The inadequacy of Chinese bureaucracy (or of Liao dual administration) as a means of controlling the Western Liao heterogeneous (but mostly non-Chinese) population explains why it was not practiced in the Qara Khitai domains. The Chinese symbols and trappings that were practiced contributed to Qara Khitai legitimization; to the shaping of a Qara Khitan identity, distinct from that of their subjects; and to elevating the ruler's position. Those symbols and trappings were sufficient to assure the Western Liao the designation of Chinese dynasty both in the Muslim world and in Yuan China, where the *Liao shi* was written.[326] They also enabled the Qara Khitai to construct their identity without using any Islamic components, in sharp contrast to their predecessors and successors. This has a twofold implication. First, it stresses the importance of the symbolic, external aspects of the government for ruling Chinese and non-Chinese alike. Second, it reveals that the definition of China in the twelfth–fourteenth centuries was very broad and closely connected to Inner Asia. It was so broad that it could define a basically Inner Asian regime, which did not control any parts of China proper, as Chinese.

Twitchett and Tietze's assertion that Western Liao history is associated with Central Asia and not China[327] is, therefore, considerably overstated. This is not only because the Qara Khitai consciously chose to identify themselves with Chinese elements, but also because, as proved in this chapter, the history of Central and Inner Asia was closely interwoven with that of China even before the rise of the Mongols.

[325] N. Di Cosmo, "Review of *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 6*," *HJAS* 61 (1996), 500–8. Most of these elements can be applied with little difficulty to the Saljūq empire as well.

[326] For the compiling of the *Liao shi* under the Yuan see Hok-lam Chan, "Chinese Official Historiography."

[327] Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 153.

CHAPTER 5

# Nomads

## Introduction

Whereas the previous chapter stressed the Chinese aspect of the Qara Khitai which distinguished them from other Inner Asian nomads, this chapter features the affinities between the Qara Khitai and nomads and former nomads in Central Asia and Mongolia, and analyzes those aspects of the Qara Khitai empire in which the nomadic background of its founders played a significant role. The first section, "Nomads, sedentaries and the state," reviews Qara Khitai nomadism, and the relationship between the nomadic rulers and their nomad and sedentary subjects.[1] The second one reviews the names by which the Qara Khitai were known in Central Asia, which stress their connection to other nomadic groups. The following three sections discuss various examples through which the affinities between the Qara Khitai and other nomadic and ex-nomadic groups in their empire and beyond are examined. The first example, and the major part of this chapter, deals with the army of the Qara Khitai, an especially important institution in nomadic empires.[2] The two last sections, which are shorter, examine the position of women and the practice of hunting. While nomadic armies are widely discussed elsewhere,[3] the two last sections include, in addition to the material on the Qara Khitai, several relevant examples from other Central Asian peoples in order to stress the similarities between them and the Qara Khitai.

## Nomads, sedentaries and the state

Most of the Qara Khitai continued to maintain their nomadic way of life in Central Asia, just as most of the Khitans had done during their long reign in north China.

[1] In this discussion, a few issues relating to the economic situation under the Qara Khitai are touched upon. A more in-depth treatment of the economic history of the Qara Khitai is left for future research.

[2] A version of this part also appears in my article "Like a Mighty Wall: The Armies of the Qara Khitai," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), 44–91.

[3] For the Mongol army see, e.g., Morgan, *Mongols*, 84–95 and the references there; for the Khwārazmian army see Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 88–93; for the western steppes see P. B. Golden, "War and Warfare in the Pre-Chinggisid Western Steppes of Eurasia," in N. Di Cosmo (ed.), *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)* (Leiden, 2002), 105–72; see also D. Sinor, "The Inner Asian Warriors," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), 133–44.





Ibn al-Athīr stated that the Qara Khitai lived in tents, as was their custom before they became rulers.[4] The merchants who reached the Jin southwestern frontier in 1175 reported that the Qara Khitai encampment near Balāsāghūn was so large that it took half a day to ride around it, a description that fits the tent cities of the Khitans in China.[5] This conforms to Juwaynī's description, according to which when the Qara Khitai settled in Balāsāghūn, their cattle grew fat.[6] The region of Balāsāghūn was the winter pasture of the Qara Khitai, while their summer pasture was either at Talas or on the northwestern slopes of the Tian Shan above the Issyk Kul, passing through Barskhān and perhaps going all the way to the outskirts of Kashgar.[7]

As for the Qara Khitai cattle, Yelü Dashi started his way westward by taking over the Liao imperial horse herds in the northwest,[8] which were of prime importance for his Kedun troops. The White Tatars presented Dashi with horses, camels and sheep when he went through their lands in 1124,[9] and the Uighur ruler offered the same variety of animals upon his submission around 1131.[10] In the course of their conquests in Central Asia, the Qara Khitai collected vast numbers of camels, horses, sheep and oxen.[11] Later, part of the Khwārazm annual tribute was paid in cattle.[12]

Horses played a dominant role in Qara Khitai life. They were essential for warfare, and Muslim sources often specifically described the Qara Khitai troops as horsemen.[13] Sacrificing horses was part of Qara Khitai ritual; horses were an important product of the Qara Khitai empire, and a seventeenth-century Chinese pictorial work portrayed a man hugging his horse as a typical Qara Khitai.[14] Camels were important for transportation, and were perhaps useful also in warfare.[15] Oxen

[4] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259. [5] *JS*, 121/2637; WF, 663; *ZK*, 121.

[6] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356; WF, 663; *ZK*, 122.

[7] Ibn al-Athīr, 9:520, where Balāsāghūn is described as the winter pasture of the Turks who converted to Islam in 435/1043–4. He claims that their summer pasture was at Bulghar, i.e. on the Volga river, which is highly improbable. Bulghar might be either a (huge) misreading of Kashgar or some other misprint. Cf. JZA 1996, 90 and Jia Congjiang, "Xi Liao shiqi Zhong Ya Qidan ren de jingji shenghuo," *Zhongguo gudai shi* 1995/2, 12; Jia Congjiang, "Xi Liao Qidan ren shenghuo fangshi kaobian," *Xiyu yanjiu* 1997/4, 80–1, who accept Bukghar. Qāshānī, *Ta'rīkh-i Ūljaytū* (Tehran, 1969), 210–11, describing Chaghadaid pastures in the fourteenth century, gives Talas as the summer pasture of the nomads who wintered around the Issyk Kul, and this fits with the importance of the city in Qara Khitai times; Barskhān is the only place in which we find the Gürkhan in peacetime (Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24).

[8] *LS*, 60/932; *JS*, 3/51, 121/2636; WF, 128, 632; *ZK*, 122; Jia Congjiang, "Zhong Ya Qidan ren," 12.

[9] *LS*, 30/355. [10] *LS*, 30/356.

[11] *Ibid.*; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275. [12] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356.

[13] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 9:81; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 18:19; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Ibn Naṭṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 169; Qazwīnī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (London, 1915) 257, tr. (*The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-qulūb* [Leiden, 1919]), 250.

[14] *LS*, 30/357; Zhou Zhizhong, *Yi yu zhi*, 1/6; Wang Qi, *San cai tu hui* (Shanghai, 1985), 1:837 (section *ren wu*, 13/6a.); *ZK*, 153.

[15] *BSJ*, 5269; Camels were an important component in the Khwārazmian forces (Nasawī, *Sīra*, 89; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 101) and in the Saljūq forces (Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 79–80); among the Tanguts, horses and camels were of the same value (Dunnell, "Tanguts," 248).

1. A Qara Khitai man according to Wang Qi's *San cai tu hui* (1607)

had ritual significance, and in Xinjiang they served as riding animals and were even used for warfare, yet as a whole they did not figure prominently in the Qara Khitai herds.[16] As usual, sheep were the backbone of the pastoral economy.[17] Hunting

[16] *LS*, 30/357; 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," fol. 232a; Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 97; the cattle grants of the Uighur and Önggüd mentioned above did not include oxen, nor do they figure in the Transoxanian and Khurāsāni herds, from which some of the Qara Khitai cattle originated (see, e.g., Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Mīrkhwānd *Ta'rīkh*, 4:312). Karaev, *Istoriia*, 200, brings evidence from bones found in the Qara Khitai realm but dated to the tenth to eleventh centuries; cf. T. N. Senigova, *Srednevekovyj Talas* (Alma Ata, 1972), 169–70, where the oxen component was relatively dominant among the animal bones found south east of Talas (26 percent, versus 41 percent sheep and 19 percent horses).

[17] Zhou Zhizhong, *Yi yu zhi*, 1/6; see also the large amount of sheep that were offered to Yelü Dashi (nn. 9, 10 above) or that nomads in Khurāsān and Transoxania offered to pay their lords: Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Abū Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:26–7; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 282; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 200; Senigova, *Talas*, 169–70.



and perhaps also fishing were supplementary occupations of the Qara Khitai, yet their economic importance is hard to perceive.[18]

Although pastoral nomadism was the main occupation of the Qara Khitai, this does not exclude the practice of agriculture as a secondary component of their economy.[19] By the Liao period, some inner Khitan tribes practiced agriculture.[20] Yin Zhiping, who followed Chang Chun to Central Asia in the 1220s, asserted that Yelü Dashi stressed the importance of agriculture and sericulture, and that he established his kingdom only after he had gained agricultural regions,[21] although this does not necessarily mean that the Qara Khitai themselves tilled the soil. The Jin poet Yuan Haowen boasted of the wine of "the Dashi people" (*Dashi ren*), i.e., the Qara Khitai, and even described its methods of preparation, although its makers were probably Qara Khitai subjects.[22] The *Yi yu zhi*, a late Yuan source, whose information about the Qara Khitai was most likely based on Jin materials, reported that the Black Khitans (*Hei Qidan*) engaged in both agriculture and pastoralism.[23] The most explicit is the seventeenth-century Abū Ghāzī, who reported that after establishing the city of Emil, the Qara Khitai turned to agriculture and made the city into a flourishing zone, a claim which is unattested by any earlier source.[24] After the collapse of their empire, however, most of the Qara Khitai reverted to full nomadism: John of Plano Carpini, who traveled in Central Asia in the 1240s, reported that the Qara Khitai and the Naiman did not till the soil but, like the Tatars, dwelt in tents.[25]

But whatever the degree of diversification in Qara Khitai occupations, it is clear that the empire they had come to rule was based on a varied economy of which agriculture, commerce, stockbreeding and manufacture were important components.[26] This was nothing new for the Qara Khitai. Economic diversification existed in their Manchurian homeland and certainly in the Liao empire,[27] and the economic value of the sedentary population was therefore obvious to them. Archaeological and literary sources make it clear that the nomadic Qara Khitai rulers did not disturb economic life in Central Asia. In fact, they might even have improved it.

The late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries was the period from which unprecedented treasures of gold coins have been found in Balāsāghūn, and the well-designed ceramics, glassware and metal artifacts unearthed there also portray it as

[18] For hunting see pp. 168–9 below.

[19] For the diverse character of pastoral nomads' economy see N. Di Cosmo, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and its Significance in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53 (1994), 1115; T. S. Noonan, "The Khazar Economy," *AEMA* 9 (1995–7), 255, 292–6.

[20] WF, 664.

[21] Yin Zhiping, *Bao guang ji*, in *Daozang* (Shanghai and Tianjin, 1985), 503; *XLSG*, 125–6; JZA 1996, 89.

[22] Yuan Haowen, *Yishan xiansheng ji* (n.p., 1850 ed.), 1/2a; WF, 661 n. 54; JZA 1996, 93–4; *XLSG*, 126; *ZK*, 124; Su Beihai, "Xi Liao," 40. Among the Samarqandi artisans whom the Mongols transferred eastward in the early 1220s were many wine makers. See T. T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge, 1997), 43.

[23] Zhou Zhizhong, *Yi yu zhi*, 1/6; JZA 1996, 93–4.

[24] Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 49; WF, 663; JZA 1996, 94.

[25] Dawson (ed.), *Mission*, 59–60; WF, 664; *ZK*, 121–2.

[26] See, e.g., Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom*, 183–5.

[27] WF, 115–26, 170–4; Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 19.

a wealthy city.[28] The mid-twelfth century also witnessed a sizable increase in the scope and types of Qarakhanid coinage in Transoxania and Farghāna, including the issue of new gold coins.[29] Chang Chun and Yelü Chucai, both of whom visited the Qara Khitai lands in the early 1220s, reported on the flourishing agriculture in the regions of Balāsāghūn, Almaliq and Transoxania,[30] and on the extensive use of irrigation techniques.[31]

The 30,000 skilled artisans the Mongols took from Samarqand and distributed among their kinsmen,[32] as well as the unspecified number of Turkestani and Khwārazmian artisans who shared the same fate,[33] suggest the flourishing of craftsmanship in the Qara Khitai empire, which is confirmed by archaeological data.[34] Travelers reported the prosperity of early thirteenth-century Khwārazm and Transoxania,[35] and the 280 wealthy men, 90 of them non-local traders, whom the Mongols found in Bukhara[36] also create the same impression. The tendency towards growing urbanization, apparent in eleventh- and twelfth-century Central Asia, continued under the Qara Khitai. Cities like Balāsāghūn, Uzgand, Talas, Utrār, Bukhara and Tirmidh continued to grow, and new towns were built in the valleys of the Ili, Chu and Talas.[37] The growing towns arose mainly on the trade routes or on the meeting points of the pasture and agricultural regions,[38] thereby attesting to the symbiotic relationship between nomads and the sedentary population.

[28] Goriacheva, "Lokalizatsii," 140; Goriacheva, *Ansambli*, 62.

[29] B. D. Kochnev and T. S. Ernazarova, "Nakhodki monet XI – nachala XIII vv. na Afrasiabe," *Afrasiab* 4 (1975), 76; E. A. Davidovich, "Coinage and the Monetary System," *HCCA4*, 402.

[30] YLCC-*XYL*, 20; YLCC-*ZR*, 6/114–17; W. Schlepp, "Ye-lü Ch'u-ts-ai in Samarkand," *Canada Mongolia Review* 1 (1975), 5–13; *Chang Chun*, 1/36b–37a, 1/40a–b, 2/1a–2b; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 88, 94, 105–6. The main products were fruits, mainly melons and wine grapes but also peaches, plums, almonds, apples, pears and pomegranates; and grains, mainly wheat, but also rice and others. In Almaliq, the five grains were sown just as in north China, but in Samarqand there were no soybeans or glutinous millet or rice. There were many mulberry trees in Balāsāghūn and Transoxania, but at least in Samarqand most of them were unsuitable for silk production; cotton was also a major product (YLCC-*XYL*, 21; *XLSG*, 105–6; JZA 1996, 95; WF, 661; *ZK*, 123–4).

[31] YLCC-*XYL*, 21 (canals at Balāsāghūn); *Chang Chun*, 1/36b–37a; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 88 (canals, wells, terraces and pits, wind and water mills in Samarqand); *XLSG*, 105–6; JZA 1996, 95. The extensive use of irrigation canals is attested archaeologically as well, in the basins of the Chu, Talas and Jaxartes. See, e.g., Karaev, *Istoriia*, 106 and the references there.

[32] Juwaynī, 1:95, tr. Boyle, 122; Allsen, *Commodity*, 35–6; *ZK*, 125.

[33] Juwaynī, 1:11, 101, tr. Boyle, 13, 128; *YS*, 153/3609; Allsen, *Commodity*, 35–6.

[34] Akademiia Nauk Kazakhskoj SSR, *Istoriia*, 86–101; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 231–44; Senigova, *Talas*, 147–68; Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 169–72; Bernshtam, *Chujskaia dolina*, 47–55, 139–42; Jin Chunhong, "Gaochang huihu wangguo de shougongye," *Xinjiang daxue xuebao*, 1997/4, 49–53; Davidovich, "Karakhanids," 140–2. The artifacts included mainly ceramics; glassware; metalwork, including weapons, agricultural tools, domestic utensils; jewelry; carriages and boats; and clothes. Jade industry existed in the central territory of the Qara Khitai and in Gaochang, as well as lacquer, textile and leather industries. Weaving and wine making were common occupations in Turkestan and Transoxania, while Samarqand retained its status as a paper-producing center (*Chang Chun*, 2/1b–2b; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 107; Allsen, *Commodity*, 43; Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 5:19; *XLSG*, 100–1, 114–17; JZA 1996, 96–104; *ZK*, 125).

[35] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, 2:395–8; *YLCC-XYL*, 21–2.

[36] Juwaynī, 1:81, tr. Boyle, 104–5.

[37] Akademiia Nauk Kazakhskoj SSR, *Istoriia*, 69–75; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 224–30; *XLSG*, 122; JZA 1996, 112–18; K. M. Baypakov, "Culture urbaine du Kazakhstan du Sud et du Semirechye à l'époque des Karakhanides," *Cahiers d'Asia Centrale* 9 (2001), 141–77.

[38] Davidovich, "Karakhanids," 140; *XLSG*, 122–3; JZA 1996, 112–18.



Whereas the economic stability of the Qara Khitai empire and its economic diversification are attested by the sources, it is much harder to determine how much of it should be ascribed to the direct contribution of the Qara Khitai themselves. They certainly did not disturb the sedentary activities of their subjects: even their conquest was conducted with little devastation, and there is no reference to turning fields into pasture lands. Since the incoming Qara Khitai forces were small in number (10,000–20,000 households), they do not seem to have disrupted the economic balance in Central Asia.[39]

The only documented active contribution of the Qara Khitai to the economic life of Central Asia was the building of Emil. The Khitans' skill in city building, demonstrated in the many cities they had built in north China and Mongolia,[40] and the growing number of new cities, especially in the central territory of the Qara Khitai, suggest that they might have had a more significant involvement in the urbanization process. It is also clear that cities that had a special position under the Qara Khitai such as Balāsāghūn, the capital; Uzgand, where the Gürkhan's treasury was located; and Utrār, through which the Khwārazmian tribute probably passed, enjoyed continuous growth under their rule.[41] However, as most of the archaeological records relate to general trends of the tenth or eleventh to twelfth centuries, it is very hard to pick up from them what the specific contribution of the Qara Khitai was to the continued urbanization of their realm, or to any other development.

Another field to which the Qara Khitai might have actively contributed was the development of their empire's eastern trade. The Qara Khitai needed a certain amount of Chinese artifacts in order to maintain their Chinese image in Central Asia, and they seem to have had a taste for Chinese goods.[42] Jin and Song artifacts found their way to Central Asia[43] and, as mentioned above, Qara Khitai wine was highly appreciated in the Jin state. Muslim sources recount that Tekish Khwārazm Shāh gave the *isfahbād* of Ṭabaristān Khitan robes (*jāmahā-i Khiṭā*),[44] and that robes embroidered in gold from Moghul (i.e., the Mongols) and *Khitā* had become valuable by the time of the Saljūq Arslan b. Turghril b. Muḥammad (r. 1161–75).[45] Yet the terminology makes it hard to know precisely whether those descriptions relate to Chinese cloth (from the Jin, Song or Xi Xia) or to cloth produced in

[39] For the number see pp. 36 and 146; earlier nomadic immigrations, which had a similar scope (e.g., the Saljūqs [Morgan, *Medieval Persia*, 32] or the Khitans who had served Arslan Khan [Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84]) also did not disturb the economic situation in Central Asia.

[40] See, e.g., Jagchid, "The Kitans"; Scott, "Khitan Settlements," 5–28.

[41] See nn. 37 and 38 above.

[42] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Sbornik letopisei* (Moscow, 1952), 180, cited in Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 62, n. 5, and see p. 100.

[43] Sokolovskaia and Rougeulle, "Stratified Finds"; Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shan*, 169–72; Bernshtam, *Chujskaia dolina*, 47–55, 139–42; Saheng Tayi, "Fukangxian, sangongxiang Xi Liao tong jing," in *Zhongguo Kaoguxue nianjian 1993* (Beijing, 1995), 265–6.

[44] Ibn Isfandiyār, *Taʾrīkh*, 130. *Isfahbād* was the title of the ruler of Ṭabaristān.

[45] Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 74; see also Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh who mentions robes of Khitai and Chinese cloth (*jāmahah az Khitāʾī wa-Chīnī*) as precious artifacts (Fakhr al-Dīn, *Taʾrīkh*, 38); and Badāunī's mention of "Gurkhāni silk": Badāonī (*sic*), *Muntakhabu-t-tawārīkh* (Patna, 1973), 103.

the Qara Khitai empire.[46] Muslim Balāsāghūni merchants and other Qara Khitai subjects reached Jin border markets, though not regularly.[47] Most of the Qara Khitai eastern trade seems to have been conducted through the Tangut state.[48] The Tanguts also controlled the Gaochang eastern trade, and took a 10 percent tax for their middleman services.[49] It is, however, very hard to determine the volume of the Qara Khitai eastern trade or how it compares with Central Asian trade with China in the pre-Qara Khitai period, a topic that still awaits systematic study.[50]

Another facet of the eastern trade was trade with Mongolia. The presence of Muslim merchants in the ranks of Chinggis Khan's forces is well documented.[51] Meeting the Great Khan as early as 1203, those Bukharan, Khujandi and Turkestani merchants must have started their connection with Mongolia under the reign of the Qara Khitai. In fact, this is clearly stated by Ibn al-Athīr. According to him, one of the reasons for sending the famous Mongol trading embassy to Utrār in 1218 was the cutting of the trade routes from Transoxania to eastern Turkestan and beyond by the Khwārazm Shāh after he had conquered Transoxania from the Qara Khitai, a step that led to a serious shortage of cloth in Mongolia.[52]

The research literature contains different evaluations of the Qara Khitai contribution to the sedentary life in Central Asia. Chinese scholars have stressed the advancement of culture in Central Asia under the Qara Khitai, ascribing it to their Chinese background.[53] Conversely, Barthold concluded that there was no evidence for a higher cultural level under the Qara Khitai,[54] and Pikov, while acknowledging the flourishing economic situation, stressed that it had nothing to do with the Chinese legacy of the Qara Khitai.[55] I tend to agree with Wittfogel and Feng[56] that the main contribution of the Qara Khitai to Central Asian life was indirect. Usually,

[46] Yāqūt (d. 1229) defined *khitā'ī* as a cloth produced in Tabriz in Iran (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 1:822, as cited in R. Amitai-Preiss, "Evidence for the Early Use of the Title Īlkhān among the Mongols," *JRAS* 3, 1 [1991], 355); see also Anonymous, *'Ajā'ib al-dunyā* (*Chudesa Mira*) (Moscow, 1993), 534.

[47] *JS*, 50/1114, 121/2637, 134/2870.

[48] Kychanov (ed.), *Kodeks*, 2:225–7 (ch. 7, art. 440); Shi Jinbo et al. (eds.), *Xi Xia*, 7/174 (same article); E. I. Kychanov, "The Organization and Control of Embassies in 12th Century Hsi Hsia according to the Tangut Law Code," *Bulletin of Sung and Yuan Studies* 18 (1986), 4–12. The Tangut codex cited above describes commercial deals conducted between the emissaries and merchants of Dashi and Xizhou on the one hand and the Tangut representatives on the other. It refers especially to fines imposed on those messengers for purchasing restricted products (grain, horses, weapon, coins) in the Tangut country. Since Qara Khitai rulers were known as Dashi after the name of their founder even after his death, I believe the reference applies to the Qara Khitai (not to Iran, as Kychanov suggested, and not to the general term Muslim [*Dashi*] as translated by Shi Jinbo, probably after Kychanov), while the term Xizhou refers to the Gaochang Uighurs. The closing of the Jin–Xi Xia border markets in 1177 partly because of the Qara Khitai spies captured there (*JS*, 50/1114, 134/2870; and see ch. 2), also suggests that Qara Khitai trade passed through the Tanguts.

[49] See previous note: *SMJW*, 1/3a.

[50] See M. Biran, "Qarakhanid Studies: A View from the Qara Khitai Edge," *Cahiers d'Asia Centrale* 9 (2001), 77–89.

[51] T. T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners 1200–1260," *Asia Major*, 3, 2 (1989), 86–94.

[52] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:362; see also Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 7:238–9; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 136b; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 104; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākiha*, 235.

[53] *XLSG*, 99, 103; JZA 1996, 91, 147.

[54] Barthold, *Türken*, 124–6.

[55] *ZK*, 160–1.

[56] WF, 664.



they did not interfere with their subjects' economic life, but the vast and relatively stable empire they created, and their tolerant and decentralized rule, enabled the continuity and flourishing of existing economic and cultural tendencies and promoted the development of internal and external trade.

What we have documented so far is that the interests of the sedentary population were not harmed under Qara Khitai rule. But how did the nomads fit in?

The late eleventh-century *Qutadghu Bilig*, while describing the nomads as unmannerly and ignorant, reported a symbiotic relationship between them and the Qarakhanid state, a symbiosis based on trade:

> They [the stockbreeders] provide us with food and clothing: horses for the army and pack-animals for transport; koumiss and milk, wool and butter, yoghurt and cheese; also carpets and felts . . . They are a useful class of men and you should treat them well, my calf! Associate with them, give them food and drink and deal justly with them. Pay them what they ask and take what you need.[57]

The continuous growth of the cities on the junctions of the steppe and sown,[58] and the zoomorphic designs on metal plaques or horn-shaped ornaments on ceramics prevalent in the tenth to twelfth centuries in Talas and the Chu valley, which were developed to cater to the nomads' taste,[59] suggest that such a symbiosis took place under the Qara Khitai as well. Moreover, the large numbers of horses, which constituted an important part of the wealth of non-nomad Turkic rulers, contemporaries of the Qara Khitai (e.g., the Saljūq Sultan Sanjar, Atsïz Khwārazm Shāh)[60] or traders (e.g., Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī),[61] implied that nomad–sedentary trade could be quite profitable for nomads and sedentaries alike.

However, peaceful symbiosis certainly was not the only relationship existing between nomads and the state. This kind of symbiosis, as well as the stability of the nomadic economy in general, was dependent on finding a balance between the availability of natural resources, the number of livestock and population size. Upheavals in the vulnerable nomadic economy could easily upset this balance. This usually happened when nomads were badly affected by unfavorable weather conditions, plagues or natural disasters. Deprived of a surplus they could sell, or even in danger of starving, the nomads would turn to raiding the sedentary population, threatening the state politically and economically.[62]

However, an upsetting of the balance caused by an increase in the number of men and livestock could be no less harmful for the state. More animals meant that more pasture lands were required, which could be achieved at the expense of cultivated lands, perhaps especially in regions like Semirechye which were suitable for both modes of production. Excessive manpower, generated either by natural growth or the migration of nomads dislocated by other forces or by economic needs, could

[57] Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom*, 184.

[58] Davidovich, "Karakhanids," 140.

[59] Senigova, *Talas*, 213–14; Baypakov, "Karakhanides," 159.

[60] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:122; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākiha*, 241.

[61] Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 68.

[62] See the comprehensive discussion in A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Madison, 1994), 69–84.

also pose a real threat to the political authority of the state or to its own existence. The sources document that around the time of the rise of the Qara Khitai the states' main problem was the growing number of nomads. This is apparent in the case of the Western Qarakhanid ruler Arslan Khan Muḥammad b. Sulaymān (r. 1102–30), who tried to limit the proliferation of his subject Khitans.[63] The Qarluq and Qangli raids that brought the Eastern Qarakhanids to call in the Qara Khitai in 1134 [64] might have taken place against a similar background. The raids of the numerous Transoxanian Qarluqs in the late 1130s caused the Western Qarakhanid ruler to ask his overlord, the Saljūq Sultan Sanjar, for help,[65] and in the late 1140s Sanjar had to cope with the growing number of Oghuz who had settled in Khurāsān after the battle of Qatwān.[66] Sanjar's solution to the growing number of nomads, both in the case of the Qarluq and in that of the Oghuz, was an attempt to expel the nomads from their pasture lands (in the Oghuz case only after he had failed to tighten state control over the nomads). The nomads' reaction was revealing: In both cases they were ready to pay for the continuous use of the pastures. The Qarluqs of Transoxania offered to give 5,000 horses, 5,000 camels and 50,000 sheep, i.e., more than two years' taxes,[67] to avoid expulsion from Transoxania. The Oghuz had suggested to Sanjar's commander at Balkh, *amīr* Qumāch, that each Oghuz family would pay 200 dirhams a year for the right to remain on their lands. Qumāch declined their offer, thereby dooming himself.[68] Later the Oghuz suggested compensating for his murder by donating to Sanjar 50,000 camels and horses, 200,000 sheep and 200,000 dinars.[69] Those offers, although never realized, certainly manifest the well-being of the nomads and their practice of trade. After Sanjar had declined their generous offers, the nomads turned to armed conflict, which in both cases led to Sanjar's (i.e., the state's) defeat.[70]

The conflicts between the nomads and the state, which resulted in the decline of the state's authority, favored the emergence of new forces in Central Asia. Those forces could easily rise to local prominence by using the reservoir of unemployed manpower accustomed from childhood to the use of arms, which originated in the population growth of the nomads. A good example of this phenomenon in the pre-Qara Khitai period is that of Khidr, cited below.[71] Although his case is certainly not a typical example of a nomadic rise to power, Khidr's manpower probably derived from "unemployed" nomads.

[63] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84; and see p. 34. [64] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355.
[65] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:312.
[66] Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 48; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:176–7.
[67] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; the calculation is based on the taxation of the Oghuz, who were supposed to provide Sanjar with 24,000 sheep for his kitchen each year (Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 48).
[68] Abū Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:26–7. See ch. 2 for a general description of the Oghuz rebellion.
[69] Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 282.
[70] Sanjar's conflict with the Qarluqs led to their turning to the Gürkhan and resulted in Sanjar's fiasco at Qatwān (see pp. 41–6); in the latter case the rebellious Oghuz captured Sanjar and kept him in prison for three years (see ch. 2).
[71] The episode probably took place either at the beginning of the eleventh century or by the early twelfth.



Khidr Beg was a son of a *dihqān* (landlord) from Tarim/Yarim, a village near Kucha (Kish[72]) in modern Xinjiang. Having great military talent, he found being a *dihqān* boring, and turned to other endeavors. After training himself in hunting, he began to raid Uighur villages. He took several Uighurs as captives, then sold them, bought himself a horse and became a horseman. Using bow, arrows and sword he then took over the horses the Uighurs used for their wheat harvest, thereby making a name for himself. When his reputation spread, many people "looking for trouble" (*fitna ṭalab*), both cavalry and foot soldiers, gathered around him. With his new troops (700 horsemen and 2,000 foot soldiers) he conquered Kucha – though only on his second attempt – and ruled the city, which had formerly belonged to the Eastern Qarakhanids. When the Eastern Qarakhanid ruler was attacked by "the Khan of China,"[73] he asked for Khidr's help, promising to confer upon him the title of Khan if he won. Khidr won the battle and became a Khan, a title that he passed on to his descendants.[74]

For the incoming Qara Khitai, rather few in number, gaining the alliance of the Central Asian nomadic population was an essential precondition for creating and consolidating their empire. Unlike Khidr, who had needed external recognition to gain legitimacy, the Qara Khitai came to Central Asia equipped with the royal prestige of the Liao, which they had used for gaining support in Kedun and among the Uighurs.[75] Upon his coronation at Emil in 1131/2, Yelü Dashi adopted the title Gürkhan, Khan of the Khans, which demonstrated his intention to be the new leader of all the nomads.[76] The Qara Khitai offered the Central Asian tribes a new form of identification presented through the charismatic leadership of Yelü Dashi.

Moreover, the rise of the Qara Khitai occurred at a time in which nomad–state rivalry suggested many opportunities for an external power that could offer its help to the contesting sides. Whether serving as defenders of the Eastern Qarakhanid state in 1134 or of the nomadic Qarluqs in 1141, the Qara Khitai significantly enlarged their territories and power. After establishing their empire, they could provide the nomads who chose to join their army with salaries from the taxes of the subject territories,[77] and sometimes they also added honorary titles.[78] This enabled the Gürkhan not only to incorporate many nomads, tribes and individuals into his army, but also to enforce strict discipline over them, thereby preserving the interests of his sedentary subjects.[79]

While state–nomad rivalry facilitated the consolidation of the Qara Khitai empire, their state was not immune from nomadic threats, which could limit their authority as much as that of their predecessors. Apart from incorporation, two Qara Khitai tactics for coping with the growing number of nomads can be deduced from the sources:

[72] Not to be confused with the Transoxanian city, later known as Shahrisabz.
[73] This probably refers either to the Khitans' raid of 1014 or 1017 or to the rebellion of the Khitan subject tribes in the early twelfth century. See pp. 33–51.
[74] 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," fols. 231a–232a, quoted in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 94–7.
[75] See pp. 29, 36. [76] See pp. 38–9. [77] See pp. 148–9 below.
[78] *LS*, 30/356. [79] See p. 149 below.

1. *Sedentarization*: One way to limit the threat of the nomads was to dislocate and sedentarize them, as the Gürkhan aspired to do in the case of the Transoxanian Qarluqs in 1163–4.[80] The reason for that move was political, i.e., the havoc those nomads wrought on the realm of the Gürkhan's vassals, the Western Qarakhanids. However, it is also possible that the Qara Khitai applied this method towards other nomads in their central territory for economic reasons, i.e., simply because they needed to secure the former's pasture lands for themselves.[81] As already suggested in the previous chapter, the Qarluq cities of Almaliq and Qayaliq, unattested before the time of the Qara Khitai, might represent such an economic-oriented solution for the Qarluqs who had formerly raided the Eastern Qarakhanids in Balāsāghūn.[82] In their sedentarization policy, however, the Qara Khitai had to keep a delicate balance between their need to ensure themselves free pasturelands and their need for skilled mounted warriors for their army.
2. *The slave trade*: Flourishing in Central Asia under the Qara Khitai[83] (as well as before and after them), the slave trade could also serve as a profitable channel for the disposal of excessive manpower. As considerable numbers of those slaves became soldiers in the ranks of the Qara Khitai vassals and rivals, it was again necessary to find the balance between selling excessive nomads and incorporating them.

Throughout most of their reign, the Qara Khitai managed to retain the balance between nomads and the state and between nomads and sedentaries in their realm, as proved by the political stability and the flourishing economic situation described above. The rise of Chinggis Khan in Mongolia, however, which coincided with the decline of the Gürkhan's power, changed this balance, as significant numbers of refugees from Mongolia found their way into the Qara Khitai empire.[84] The Qara Khitai first tried to incorporate them by allying with Güchülüg, who was supposed to lead their forces into the Qara Khitai realm. By then, however, the Qara Khitai had become too weak to implement the incorporation policy successfully, and it therefore resulted in Güchülüg's usurpation.[85] Simultaneously with Güchülüg's activities, local forces also made use of the weakness of the Qara Khitai state and of the growing number of refugees for their own interests. The rise of Ozar (or Bozar) Khan to the throne of Almaliq, which coincided with Güchülüg's accession, illustrates this notion:

> In Almaliq there was one of the Qarluqs of Quyas, a man of great valor, whose name was Ozar, who used to steal the people's horses from the herds and to commit other criminal actions, such as highway robbery, etc. He was joined by all the ruffians of that region and so became very powerful. He then used to enter the villages, and if in any place the people refused to yield him obedience, he would seize that place by war and violence. And so he continued until he took Almaliq, which is the chief city of that region, and subjugated the whole region.[86]

[80] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310–11; "Alfī," fol. 80b; and see ch. 2.
[81] See Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:94–5.
[82] See p. 115.
[83] Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 48; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:441–3, 2:9, 13, 26, 28; Anonymous, *Ta'rīkh-i shāhī-i Qarā Kitāīyyān* (Tehran, 1976–7), 96 ff.
[84] See pp. 74–7.
[85] See *ibid.*



When Güchülüg attacked Ozar, trying to regain Almaliq, the latter transferred his alliance to Chinggis Khan, who confirmed his right over the city.[87] The obvious similarities between Ozar's accession and that of Khidr document the decline of the state authority towards the end of the Qara Khitai period. Güchülüg, however, did not manage to stabilize his state. Deprived of the Qara Khitai legitimacy and much less familiar with the sedentary way of life, his accession led to a considerable shift in the nomad–sedentary balance in the Qara Khitai empire in favor of the nomads, which was a prelude to the situation under the Mongols.

## Qara Khitai, Turks and Mongols

Even before the immigration of the Qara Khitai into Central Asia, the Khitans, who originated from Manchuria and spoke a para-Mongolic language, were enumerated among the Turkic tribes by Muslim authors.[88] The Liao dynasty retained a certain part of the Turkic imperial traditions mainly due to the influence of the Uighurs, to which the Khitan consort clan, the Xiao, was closely connected.[89] Moreover, many Turkic and Mongol tribesmen joined Yelü Dashi when he came to Central Asia.[90] It is therefore not surprising that the Muslim sources stressed the affinities between the Qara Khitai, the Turks and the Mongols, i.e., between the Qara Khitai and other Inner Asian nomadic groups.

The Qara Khitai are often referred to as "the infidel Turks" (*kāfir al-Turk*, *al-Atrāk al-kuffār*), or simply as Turks.[91] Jūzjānī described several Shamsī mamluks of the Delhi sultanate as "a Turk from the Qara Khitai," or a "Khitan Turk";[92] and in the fifteenth century even the Gürkhan of the Qara Khitai was said to be a handsome Turk.[93] The affinities between the Qara Khitai and the Mongols are less emphasized but they also exist in Muslim sources: Jūzjānī began his account of the Mongol invasion with a description of "the first of them [i.e., the Mongols], the Qara Khitai;"[94] 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, a thirteenth-century historian of the Saljūqs, turning to the Mongols after he had recounted the expulsion of the Qara

[86] Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 75.
[87] *Ibid.*; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣurah*, 136–7.
[88] R. Dankoff, "Kashgari on the Tribal and Kinship Organization of the Turks," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 4 (1972), 29; for a later reference see Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, *Ta'rīkh*, 47.
[89] WF, 23, 87, 93, 115, 142, 191, 112, 224.
[90] See pp. 32, 36 and 39; also p. 146 above.
[91] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 18:19; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 6:183; Juwaynī, 2:79–80, tr. Boyle, 347; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī sinā'at al-inshā'* (Cairo, 1913–19), 4:383; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mirāt al-zamān*, 8/1:180; Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 24:375.
[92] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:9, 13, 28. For Jūzjānī's broad use of the term Turk see P. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge, 1999), 326.
[93] Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, "Jughrāfīyā-i Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū," MS BM Or. 1577, fol. 222a.
[94] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:94.

Khitai from Transoxania, described the former as "another kind/race (*jins*) of the infidel Turks," thereby implying the similarity of the three groups (Qara Khitai, Turks, Mongols).[95] Ibn ʿArabshāh (fifteenth century) reported that the Khwārazm Shāh had deposed "the Tatars who were called Qara Khitai."[96] Bar Hebraeus even once defined the Qara Khitai as "the Huns,"[97] thereby completing their identification with the Inner Asian nomadic stereotype. Chinese sources, however, did not confuse the Qara Khitai with the Mongols, Turks or other nomads, but were perfectly aware of their identity as Khitans, ethnically related to the Liao Khitans and to the Khitans who remained under Jin rule.[98]

Another possible proof of the affinity between the Qara Khitai and other Inner Asian nomads in the Muslim view is that often the same people were described as belonging both to the Qara Khitai and to another nomadic group. The best example is that of Terken Khatun, Tekish's wife and the mother of Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh. Terken Khatun is usually said to have belonged to the Qipchaq tribal union, being a daughter of the Qipchaq Khan.[99] Juwaynī described her as a Qangli,[100] i.e., belonging to that component of the Qipchaq confederation, and the knowledgeable Nasawī stated that she belonged to the Bayawut (Bāyāwut) clan of the Yimak, i.e., Kimek, another component of the Qipchaqs.[101] Yet Nasawī also let it be understood that Terken Khatun belonged to the Qara Khitai: While describing the rebellion of the Qara Khitai forces against the Khwārazm Shāh in 1218–19, he defined the rebels as Muḥammad's maternal cousins (*min banī akhwālihi*), implying that Muḥammad's mother was a Qara Khitai.[102] While Nasawī might have suggested only a vague kinship between Muḥammad and the Qara Khitai, al-Dhahabī (fourteenth century) definitely described Terken Khatun as a Qara Khitai.[103] Ibn Khaldūn, explicitly summarizing Nasawī's information, concluded that Terken Khatun belonged to the Bayawut, of the Yimak-Kimek, one of the sub-tribes (*buṭūn*) of the Qara Khitai.[104]

[95] Iṣfahānī, *Taʾrīkh*, 255; Bundārī, *Zubdat al-nuṣra*, 289. For the affinities between Mongols and Turks, a prevalent notion in Mamluk historiography, see R. Amitai-Preiss, "Northern Syria between the Mongols and the Mamluks: Political Boundary, Military Frontier and Ethnic Affinities," in N. Standen and D. Powers (eds.), *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands 700–1700* (London, 1999), 146–7. For good examples of this notion see, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 12:361, 367.

[96] Ibn ʿArabshāh, *Fākiha*, 237.

[97] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 267 (this passage has no equivalent in the Arabic version of his work). The identification with nomadic people did not prevent the identification of the Qara Khitai with the Chinese. Actually, they often come together in the same source (e.g., Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 351, 353; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84, 86; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275).

[98] E.g., *LS*, 30/355–8; *SC*, 58/6b–7a, 98/15a, 148/9a; *JY*, 28/561; Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, 3/9, 10; *JS*, 121/2637–8; The closest affinity between Khitans and Mongols is suggested by the *Yi yu zhi*, a late Yuan work, that notes that the Black Khitans (*Hei Qidan*), i.e., the Qara Khitai, were not identical with the Tatars, although their customs had much in common (Zhou Zhizhong, *Yi yu zhi*, 1/6).

[99] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:301–2.

[100] Juwaynī, 2:198, tr. Boyle, 465.

[101] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 99; see Golden, "Cumanica IV," 110; PH, 89–98.

[102] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 101.

[103] Dhahabi, *Taʾrīkh*, 62:335, 327 (citing the thirteenth-century Muwaffaq b. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī); see also Ibn ʿArabshāh, *Fākiha*, 237.

[104] Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, 5:235.



Another connection between the Qara Khitai and the Qipchaqs is related to the Delhi sultanate. Iltutmish, the founder of the sultanate, belonged to the Ölberli tribe of the Qipchaq. Yet in the *Simṭ al-ʿulā* and in Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's later work he was described as a Qara Khitai.[105] Indeed, the mamluks in Iltutmish's personal guard included several Qara Khitai commanders,[106] and when Baraq Ḥājib escaped from Khwārazm, he hoped to find refuge in India, counting on the ethnic solidarity of Iltutmish or his commanders.[107] Eventually Baraq settled in Kirmān and never made it to India, but when in the early 1280s the Kirmānid Ḥajjāj Sultan sought refuge from his mother, he escaped to India where he remained for a decade.[108]

In sources for the Mongol period, it is also apparent that the few important figures who were defined by one source as Qara Khitai were defined by other sources as belonging to one of the Mongol tribes: Chin Temür (d. 1235–6), who served as the Mongol commissioner (*basqaq*) of Khurāsān and Māzandarān, was a Qara Khitai according to Juwaynī, but an Önggüd according to Rashīd al-Dīn.[109] The famous Bolad Chingsang (Bolod the *chengxiang*, grand councilor), the Yuan representative at the Ilkhanid court, was described by Rashīd al-Dīn, a very close friend, as a Dörben Mongol, but Qāshānī, who was probably also familiar with Bolad, claimed he was a Qara Khitai.[110]

The designation "Qara Khitai" could have served as a political rather than ethnic appellation, as reflected in Nasawī's description of the Qarakhanid ruler of Utrār, a Qara Khitai subject, as "the first of the Qara Khitai (*Khitā*) who had turned over to Khwārazm."[111] Yet this explanation is inapplicable to the examples above, most of which refer to the period that followed the dissolution of the Qara Khitai empire. Nor do we have any other proof for the political subjugation of the Qipchaqs (or the Önggüd or Dörben Mongols) to the Qara Khitai. What is important to us here is not the "real" ethnic origin of the figures mentioned above, but the affinities of the Qara Khitai with other nomadic groups (Qipchaqs, Mongols), apparent from those mixed reports.[112]

[105] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-ʿulā*, 23; Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-i Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū* (Tehran, 1997), 3:51. For the Ölberli see P. B. Golden, "Cumanica II: The Ölberli (Ölperli): The Fortunes and Misfortunes of an Inner Asian Nomadic Clan," *AEMA* 6 (1986 [1988]), 5–29. The *EI2* article, following Ibn Khaldūn's method, concluded that Iltutmish was "of the Ilberi [*sic*] branch of the Qara Khitai Turks" (A. S. Bazmee Ansari, "Iltutmish," *EI2* 3 [1971], 1155).

[106] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:9, 13, 19, 22, 28; Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, 63.

[107] Juwaynī, 2:212, tr. Boyle, 477; Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-ʿulā*, 23; Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā*; 3:51; Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, *Taʾrīkh-i Saljūqiyān-i Kirmān*, 201.

[108] Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-ʿulā*, 48; Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, 79; Lambton, *Continuity*, 162.

[109] Juwaynī, 2:218, tr. Boyle, 482; Rashīd, *Successors*, 51; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:101.

[110] Rashīd/ʿAlīzādah, 518; Qāshānī, *Taʾrīkh*, 8. For Bolad's career see T. T. Allsen, "Biography of a Cultural Broker: Bolad Ch'eng-Hsiang in China and Iran," in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (eds.), *The Court of the Ilkhans 1290–1340* (Oxford, 1994), 7–22; T. T. Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers of Medieval Eurasia: Bolad Aqa and Marco Polo," in M. Gervers and W. Schlepp (eds.), *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic* (Toronto, 1994), 63–78; T. T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001), 59–80.

[111] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66.

[112] The differing reports might have originated in reference to maternal and paternal sides: Bolad or Chin Temür might have had a Qara Khitai mother and a Mongol father, and the Qara Khitai mother could have been dominant enough to give her ethnic attribution to her children.

The following pages will show that the affinities between the Qara Khitai and other Turkic or Mongol groups went beyond the level of appellations.

## The army

### *The organization of the army*

#### Assembling and ethnic composition

Yelü Dashi went westward in 1124 with a few followers, numbering 80 or 200 men,[113] who included several minor members of the Liao royal clan (the Yelü) and the Liao consort clan (the Xiao), and probably several Chinese men.[114] In the six years during which Dashi stayed in Kedun, he established a nucleus of several tens of thousands of men,[115] who were the basis of his army. Those forces were already rather diverse. Among their main components were the Kedun garrison, which had numbered 20,000 Khitan tribal horsemen in the days of Liao splendor;[116] the descendants of 700 banished households of Han, Jurchen and Bohai origins, who were added to the garrison during the eleventh century;[117] contingents of the Mongol tribes that resided in Kedun's vicinity who supplied Dashi with more than 10,000 crack troops;[118] and probably some deserters from the Liao.

It is unclear how large a Kedun force accompanied Dashi westwards, but it seems to have been limited to 10,000–20,000 households.[119] No doubt some of those initial troops were lost in the first battles in Central Asia in 1130–1, when Dashi was defeated by the Qyrghyzes, the Uighurs and the Eastern Qarakhanids. Yet he also gained new adherents. Among them were deserters from the Jin forces sent against him in 1131, some of whom escaped to Mobei, i.e. the regions of Mongolia and the Yenisei.[120] In Emil, where Dashi was enthroned in 1131/2, he was joined by "many Turks and tribes" that enlarged his force to 40,000 households.[121] After the conquest of Balāsāghūn in 1134, 10,000 Khitans, who had already arrived in the west before the immigration of the Qara Khitai and were formerly subjects of the Western Qarakhanid Arslan Khan Muḥammad b. Sulaymān (1102–30), also joined Dashi, and allegedly "doubled his forces."[122] Another several thousand horsemen, some of whom were probably of Khitan origin, joined the Qara Khitai with their Khitan commander, after the defeat the Qara Khitai inflicted on the Jurchens in Mongolia in 1135/6.[123] Warriors continued to join the Qara Khitai army during their conquests in Central Asia,[124] yet the armies of their subject kingdoms were not dissolved, but retained their structure and served as the Qara Khitai auxiliary troops (discussed below).

[113] Juwaynī, 2:86–7, tr. Boyle, 354; *LS*, 30/355. [114] *LS*, 30/356–7; see p. 96.
[115] Thus according to a Song estimate from 1128, *SC*, 98/7a, cf. 58/6b; WF, 668; see p. 32.
[116] *LS*, 37/451, 14/158, 159; WF, 557; Yanai Wataru, "Qidan Kedun," 185–98; Haneda Toru, "Xi Liao," 157–61; Chen Dezhi, "Dashi," 55–7.
[117] *LS*, 37/451, 159; WF, 557. [118] *LS*, 30/355–6; for the tribes see p. 32.
[119] See pp. 36 and 37. [120] Xiong Ke, *Zhongxing xiao ji*, 10/123.
[121] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355. [122] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84.
[123] *SC*, 148/7 ff.; *XLSG*, 53. [124] *LS*, 30/356.



This description of the assembling of the Qara Khitai army demonstrates its multi-ethnic character. Its main components were Khitans, who held most of the positions of command despite their relatively small number; Turks, an important sector both in the Qara Khitai main army and in their auxiliary troops; and Mongols, probably from the Kedun tribes, whose presence is mentioned also in the battle of Qatwān.[125] Among the Mongols were apparently contingents of the Jajirad and the Dila tribes,[126] and, in Güchülüg's time, many Naimans.[127] Apart from that, the Qara Khitai forces probably included some Chinese, possibly already from the formation of the first nucleus by Yelü Dashi,[128] and their auxiliary troops presumably contained an Iranian component as well.

#### Command, units and ranks

At the head of the Qara Khitai army stood the Gürkhan, who led their most important military operations, such as the battle of Qatwān in 1141, and the decisive battles against Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh and Güchülüg in 1210–11.[129] In many campaigns the Gürkhan delegated power to other commanders, personally nominating both the chief commanders and their deputies.[130] For specific campaigns, he entrusted to others the leadership of large contingents, even those estimated at 50,000 or 70,000 men.[131] Apart from Güchülüg, all the identified commanders of the Qara Khitai army were noble Khitans, belonging to either the Yelü or Xiao clans. Most prominent among them were the imperial sons-in-law, or their fathers. Other leading military commanders bore the Turkic title *tayangu*.[132] The military titles imply that the Qara Khitai maintained a bureau for military affairs (*shumi yuan*), an agency that in China controlled the state's military forces and directed military operations.[133] Dashi's stress on planning before attacking[134] suggests that the *shumi yuan* was involved in such planning, but there is no information about the functions of this bureau or about its relation to other military command posts in the Qara Khitai ranks. It is also apparent that the Gürkhan had a personal bodyguard. Yet there is no indication of the importance of this unit, or that it in any way resembled the Liao *ordu*.[135]

[125] *LS*, 30/355; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 45 (*Tatār*); Faṣīḥī, *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, 2:235 (*Moghul*).
[126] *LS*, 30/357. [127] Juwaynī, 1:46–7, tr. Boyle, 63. [128] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85, and see below.
[129] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85 (Qatwān); Juwaynī, 2:83–4, tr. Boyle, 351 (1210–11).
[130] *LS*, 30/356, 357. [131] *LS*, 30/357; *JS*, 121/2367; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84, and see pp. 108–91.
[132] See pp. 109–11, where the military administration is more fully discussed. See also table 2.
[133] *LS*, 30/356; WF, 665. For the Liao *shumi yuan* see, e.g., Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 77–80.
[134] *LS*, 30/357.
[135] *LS*, 30/357, 45/698–9. The *ordu* were the personal troops of the Liao emperor and the crack troops of the empire. Generally the Liao army was composed of three main components: (a) the *ordu*, the personal troops of the emperor, most of them Khitans, who served as the empire's crack troops and were mostly mounted; (b) the Khitan tribal army, also mostly mounted, to which the frontier non-Khitan tribes served as an auxiliary force; (c) the militia, primarily composed of Chinese and/or other sedentary citizens, who served as infantry. The Liao army also had special units of catapultiers and of (non-mounted) archers, mostly manned by Chinese: WF, 513–20; for the Liao army in general see WF, 505–90; Yang Rouwei, *Qidan*, 1–90, 216–65; Feng Jiqin, *Qidan*, 355–88.

The minimal age for enrollment in the Qara Khitai army was eighteen years.[136] It retained the characteristic Inner Asian decimal organization, attested by the fact that its forces are always described in multiples of thousands or tens of thousands.[137] Those units were subdivided into smaller ones of one hundred men.[138] Some of these units were organized along tribal lines, as can be deduced from the reference to the commander of the crack troops of the Dila tribe. The commander of this unit was, however, a Khitan.[139]

Ibn al-Athīr's assertion that the Gürkhan came to fight in Qatwān with "the armies of the Chinese, the Khitans, the Turks and others,"[140] might be thought to imply that the Qara Khitan army was organized along ethnic lines, as was apparent in the Liao army.[141] But the situation is more complex. Since the Qara Khitai are often called Chinese or Turks in Middle Eastern sources,[142] it is hard to determine what Ibn al-Athīr meant by differentiating between Khitans, Turks and Chinese. Moreover, while Turkic forces were certainly present among Qara Khitai troops, as was shown above, there is no evidence of extensive Chinese troops (as opposed to individual Chinese) in any other source.[143]

Another important characteristic of the Qara Khitai army was that no permanent Qara Khitai forces were stationed in the conquered territories. The proof for this is that whenever a Qara Khitai army was needed, troops were sent from the Gürkhan's (or *tayangu*'s) headquarters, not from the subject territory itself.[144] The basic differentiation in the Qara Khitai army was between the standing army, probably mostly tribal, and their auxiliary troops.

### Methods of payment

The standing army of the Qara Khitai was salaried.[145] Moreover, in sharp contrast to the customary practice in Liao China, Saljūq Iran and Qarakhanid Central Asia, the Gürkhans did not allocate appanages to their commanders.[146] Modern scholars perceive this phenomenon as a lesson Dashi learnt from the growing power of appanage holders in the last days of the Liao dynasty.[147] The most obvious advantage of this method of payment was that it enabled the Gürkhan to keep his troops under relatively strict control. Yet it also laid a huge burden on the Gürkhan's treasury. One of the ways for him to refill his treasury, as well as to engage his troops, was by assigning military help to his vassals in return for certain payments or spoils.[148] Financial considerations probably also determined the main

[136] *LS*, 30/357.
[137] E.g. *JS*, 121/2637; *LS*, 30/357; and see the discussion of the size of the armies below.
[138] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; see also *LS*, 30/356. [139] *LS*, 30/357. [140] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85.
[141] See, e.g., *LS*, 45/744 that speaks about Khitan, Chinese, Bohai (a Manchurian kingdom, subject to the Khitans) and Xi (a Turkic tribe, subject to the Khitans) components; WF, 519 ff.
[142] For the appelation "Chinese" see ch. 4, introduction.
[143] See pp. 93–4; also pp. 143–6 above. [144] WF, 666; p. 117.
[145] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 359. [146] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86.
[147] JZA 1996, 78; *ZK*, 149; *XLSG*, 73.
[148] For examples, see (pp. 83–4). Paying for military help seems to have been the norm in Central Asia by the time of the Qara Khitai. See, e.g., Juwaynī, 2:18, tr. Boyle, 290–1, where Sulṭān Shāh and his mother try to buy Mu'yyad's support.



direction of Qara Khitai military involvement in the last decades of their rule, i.e., mostly in the west, because it was much more profitable to fight in the rich regions of Khurāsān, Khwārazm or Transoxania than to assist one Inner Asian tribe against the other.

### Discipline

The paid army enabled the Gürkhan to enforce strict discipline among his troops. This was also achieved by the great prestige that the Gürkhan enjoyed among his followers,[149] and by the harsh punishments inflicted on those who opposed him.[150] As a result, even in the last years of the Qara Khitai empire, the Gürkhan managed to forbid the pillage of its subject territories.[151] Enforcing strict discipline was essential in the environment in which the Qara Khitai found themselves, as will be explained below.

### Auxiliary troops

Apart from their standing army, the Qara Khitai made use of the armies of their subject kingdoms and tribes. The subject kingdoms, and probably the tribes as well, were allowed to retain their armies, but their duties towards their Qara Khitai overlords included occasional mobilization of these armies as auxiliary forces for the Gürkhan. As early as the battle of Qatwān the Gürkhan was described as the commander of the Khitans, Khotan (an important city in the realm of the Eastern Qarakhanids) and the Yaghma (a Turkic tribe),[152] a description that suggests that the vassal troops took part in the battle as Qara Khitai auxiliary forces. Certainly the Qarluqs, a Turkic tribe, which was instrumental in summoning the Qara Khitai to fight in Qatwān and later became their vassal, reinforced the Gürkhan's troops in Qatwān, allegedly with 30,000–50,000 horsemen.[153]

In later wars, the Qara Khitai use of vassal troops as auxiliaries is more explicit. The Eastern Qarakhanid ruler Ilig Türkmen followed the Gürkhan's order and came to the aid of the Western Qarakhanids in 1158;[154] Sultan 'Uthmān of Samarqand together with other Qarakhanid princes assisted the Qara Khitan army at Andkhūd in 1204;[155] and around the same time, Arslan Khan the Qarluq was asked to help the Gürkhan against the rebellious sultan of Khotan.[156]

Apart from these auxiliary armies, another source of potential auxiliaries, applicable both to the Qara Khitai and to their subject kingdoms, was the population

[149] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Niẓāmī, *Chāhar maqāla*, 22, tr. 24; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 230; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335.
[150] *LS*, 29/349; Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74.
[151] E.g., Juwaynī, 2:91, tr. Boyle, 359; Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310. Pillaging the lands beyond the empire's border was, however, legitimate (e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187).
[152] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 253.
[153] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 172; Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 85; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 110.
[154] Juwaynī, 2:14–15, tr. Boyle, 288.
[155] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188.
[156] Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74.

in their realms, both nomadic and settled. There is evidence for the use of such auxiliary forces both during Liao rule, where they account for the non-Khitan border tribes and for the Chinese militia,[157] and in Khwārazm, the Qara Khitai vassal and later rival.[158]

The use of tribal auxiliaries among Qara Khitai subject rulers was attested in 1158, when the Western Qarakhanid ruler Chaghrï Khan (r. 1157–61) summoned the nomadic Türkmens of the lower Jaxartes to help him against another rebellious tribe, the Qarluqs.[159] However, as discussed in the previous section and suggested by the above example, the tribal population, mounted and armed,[160] was not only a source of auxiliaries but also a potential threat to the Central Asian states. While the tribal population in the central territory was incorporated into the Qara Khitai standing army, the Gürkhan was obliged to interfere in 1163–4 in the Qarluq–Qarakhanid rivalry, in order to maintain order among the troublesome tribal population in his subject kingdoms. The Gürkhan ordered them to move into Kashgar, where they were to refrain from taking up arms and instead engage in agriculture, but when this policy failed the Qarluqs were subdued by force.[161]

Regarding the sedentary population, fighting urban elements (i.e., "civilian" warriors) are attested in the Qara Khitai empire in Bukhara,[162] in the Eastern Qarakhanid cities of Kashgar and Kucha,[163] in Almaliq[164] and even in the Qara Khitai capital, Balāsāghūn.[165] Their warfare was mostly defensive, and at least in the case of Almaliq they were well armed.[166] Again the warlike character of the urban population was not only a benefit, such as when the Bukharans fought against the Khwārazmians in 1182,[167] but also a threat. This was especially true for the Qara Khitai who were ethnically and religiously different from most of their civilian subjects. The threat was apparent, for example, when in 1211 the people of Balāsāghūn closed the city gates before the Qara Khitai army returning from Transoxania,[168] or after 1211, when the people of Almaliq withstood Güchülüg's attempts to conquer the city.[169] It is possible that the Qara Khitai also tried to limit arms among the civilian population in their central territory: In 1175 Uighur merchants from Balāsāghūn told the Jin authorities that in Balāsāghūn they "usually do not bear arms."[170] Limitations on arms-bearing had been practiced at the time of the Liao, when it affected their Chinese and Bohai subjects. This policy,

[157] WF, 518–19.
[158] Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 88; for a general description of the different groups of non-regular soldiers in Khurāsān and Transoxania see Paul, *Herrscher*, 93–139.
[159] Juwaynī, 2:14–15, tr. Boyle, 288; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 243b; "Alfī," fol. 63a; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 333–4.
[160] "Alfī," fol. 80b (for the Transoxanian Qarluqs).
[161] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310–11; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "A'rāḍ," fol. 213b–214a; "Alfī," fol. 80b. For details and dating see ch. 2. Cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 333–4.
[162] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 125–7; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137–8; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 346–7.
[163] Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338. [164] Qarshī, *Mulkhakāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135.
[165] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360. [166] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al ṣuraḥ*, 135.
[167] For the date see pp. 61–2. [168] See n. 165. [169] See n. 164. [170] *JS*, 121/2637.



however, did not exclude the incorporation of these people in the militia: When they were needed for special campaigns, the Liao central administration allocated them weapons from the imperial arsenals.[171] However, there is no evidence for Qara Khitai mobilization of the civilian population of their central territory.

## The size of the armies

Some Muslim sources stress the huge size of the Qara Khitai armies.[172] Yet as exaggerating the rival's troops is either a convenient excuse for one's defeat or an easy means to magnify one's victory, these figures should not be taken literally.[173] The elusive character of numbers is vividly demonstrated by the different estimates of the Qara Khitai troops at Qatwān. According to Muslim sources, the Qara Khitai forces (without the Qarluq reinforcements) added up to 100,000, 300,000 or 700,000 troops,[174] i.e., they surpassed Sanjar's army by a ratio of 1:3 or 1:10.[175] The *Liao shi*, however, explicitly stresses Dashi's numerical inferiority vis-à-vis his rivals at Qatwān. According to this source the Qara Khitai left and right flanks at Qatwān consisted of 2,500 men each.[176] In Chinese and Liao strategy, this number suggests a central force of 10,000 or 20,000 men. The total Qara Khitan force would therefore be composed of a maximum of 25,000 men. Even if Dashi deployed his army at Qatwān in an unorthodox manner (i.e., with an especially large center),[177] there is still a huge gap between the Chinese and Muslim estimates. A few Muslim authors, however, reported that the battle was fought by equal forces.[178]

Numerical superiority is suggested by several sources as the reason for the Qara Khitai's second great victory at Andkhūd in 1204, though other reasons, namely the weather or Qara Khitai tactics, are also mentioned.[179] The numbers that are mentioned in regard to this battle are, however, much smaller: Muslim estimates suggest that the Qara Khitai sent to Andkhūd a force of either 10,000[180] or 40,000 men,[181] an important segment of which was composed of the auxiliary Qarakhanid forces.[182] The rival Ghūrid army is estimated at more than 50,000 men,[183] that is, larger even than the higher estimate for the Qara Khitai forces. The presumed numerical superiority of the Qara Khitai can be explained by the role of the Khwārazmian army, allegedly 70,000 men,[184] who originally requested the Qara Khitai to take part in the battle. But if this is the case, it can be argued

[171] WF, 519, 539. [172] Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; and see below.
[173] D. Ayalon, "Regarding Population Estimates in the Countries of Medieval Islam," *JESHO* 28 (1985), 1–19.
[174] *Majma' al-ansāb*, 119 (100,000); Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 18:19; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:220 (300,000); Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rikh*, 254; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar* 6:535 (700,000).
[175] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81, 85; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83. [176] *LS*, 30/356. [177] WF, 648.
[178] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:15–16.
[179] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125a; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403.
[180] Juwaynī, 2:89–90, tr. Boyle, 357; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71.
[181] Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b.
[182] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 323.
[183] Juwayni, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324. [184] Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 322.

that the Qara Khitai victory was achieved mainly by their ability to coordinate the different armies and not by their mere numerical superiority.

Several other numerical evaluations refer to the Qara Khitai forces: Dashi's troops at Kedun numbered several tens of thousands,[185] 40,000 households in 1131 at Emil,[186] to which 10,000 Khitans, who "doubled his forces," i.e., were a substantial reinforcement, joined around 1134.[187] In the same year Dashi is said to have sent 70,000 men against the Jin, a number that did not include all his troops,[188] but perhaps included auxiliaries of the Eastern Qarakhanids, the Qarluq and the Qangli, who surrendered to Dashi around this time. Yet the number, as well as this whole campaign, certainly looks inflated.[189] Other numbers relating to the campaigning Qara Khitai forces are smaller and closer to the Andkhūd scale: 50,000; 30,000; 10,000.[190]

Another way to evaluate the size of the Qara Khitai troops is by counting the remaining troops in their post-imperial period. When the Mongols attacked Güchülüg in 1218, they defeated more than 30,000 Qara Khitai troops near Balāsāghūn.[191] Another small contingent of the Qara Khitai main army or of their auxiliary troops was by this time fighting with the Mongols, yet it is hard to estimate its size.[192] A sizable division of the Qara Khitai army was by then incorporated into the Khwārazmian army. This segment is estimated at 70,000 men, yet apart from the Qara Khitai, it also included other ethnic elements, especially Qipchaqs.[193]

More puzzling information is supplied by the census conducted by the Gürkhan Yilie (r. 1151–63), in which it was found that there was a total of 84,500 households.[194] The census was probably limited to the Qara Khitai central territory around Balāsāghūn, yet it is hard to evaluate its meaning for two reasons. First, it is unclear how many of the listed households were supposed to provide soldiers for the Qara Khitai, i.e., whether the census included only the nomad population or, more likely, the sedentary population as well.[195] Second, it is unclear how many men each household was required to provide for the army. In the Liao period, the ratio was two men per household, but it is doubtful whether an automatic extrapolation is meaningful here.[196]

[185] *SC*, 98/15a. [186] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 355. [187] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84. [188] *LS*, 30/357.
[189] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356; for a discussion of the inconsistencies regarding this journey see WF, 624; p. 40.
[190] Juwaynī, 2:14–15, 91, tr. Boyle, 288, 359; *JS*, 121/2737.
[191] *YS*, 149/3522. [192] *YS*, 120/2969.
[193] Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2:583 (whence Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 109–10; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 7:189; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:14, 327); Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākiha*, 237; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 101, mentions 7,000 Khitan commanders (*muqaddams*). See also ch. 3, epilogue (pp. 86–7); for the confusion between the Qipchaqs and the Qara Khitai see pp. 144–51.
[194] *LS*, 30/357.
[195] See ch. 2; judging by Juwaynī's statement that in 1211 47,000 citizens were killed in Balāsāghūn, the sedentary population, which was not part of the standing army, was quite sizable: Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360.
[196] WF, 659–60; In the Liao period, for example, the minimum recruitment age was fifteen (*LS*, 34/397; WF, 560) while Yilie's census counted only the men over eighteen years old.



On the basis of the census several scholars have concluded that the Qara Khitai standing army numbered 80,000–100,000 men, a number that corresponds to those given in the sources.[197] To these men should be added the auxiliary armies of the subject kingdoms, which supplied reinforcements of at least several tens of thousands of men.[198]

Though the Qara Khitai army seems sizable, it is smaller in comparison to the numbers given for the warriors enrolled in the *dīwān* of the Khwārazm Shāh, namely 400,000 men.[199] One should bear in mind that, like the Qara Khitai, the Khwārazm Shāh could also add auxiliaries from the civil population and/or women.[200]

## *Warfare*

### Weapons

Several modern scholars have suggested that Qara Khitai victories over their Muslim rivals were achieved through their better weaponry.[201] This supposition, however, is not supported by the sources. It is based mainly on an extrapolation that ascribes to the Qara Khitai the armament of the Liao Khitans.[202] According to the *Liao shi*, each soldier had to equip himself with nine pieces of iron armor, along with saddle clothes, bridles, armor of leather and iron for the horses according to their strength, four bows, four hundred arrows, a long and a short spear, a club, axe, halberd, small banner, hammer, awl, knife and flint, a bucket for the horse, a peck of dried food, a grappling hook, a (felt) umbrella and two hundred feet of rope for tying up the horses.[203] This list is certainly impressive, although it could hardly be carried or effectively used by an individual soldier. It is, however,

[197] See WF, 659; *ZK*, 151; G. G. Pikefu (Pikov), "Hala Qidan guojia de junshi zuzhi," *Xibei shidi* 1984/1, 125; JZA 1996, 81.
[198] The sources retained a few estimates regarding the auxiliary troops: in 1158 Ilig Türkmen led 10,000 horsemen, who partially belonged to the Eastern Qarakhanids (Juwaynī, 2:14–15, tr. Boyle, 288). The only figure referring to the Western Qarakhanid army is the 12,000 mamluks of Arslan Khan (r. 1102–30) (Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 241–2; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 92), and his successors might have had similar forces. When Chinggis Khan moved against the Khwārazm Shāh in 1220, the combined forces of the Gaochang Uighurs and the Qarluqs in Qayaliq and Almaliq (all former Qara Khitan vassals) are said to have doubled his (sizable but unspecified) forces (Juwaynī, 1:63, tr. Boyle, 82). More concretely, we are told that the Uighurs of Gaochang provided the Mongol general who confronted Güchülüg with 3,000 (Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 338) or 10,000 warriors (*YS*, 122/3000; Yu Ji, *Daoyuan*, 24/403). Rashīd al-Dīn also mentioned a *tümen* (unit of theoretically 10,000 men), led by a Sönid Mongol, that consisted of Uighurs, Qarluqs, Türkmens and troops from Kashgar and Kucha, both cities formerly under the Eastern Qarakhanids, i.e., subject to the Qara Khitai (Rashīd/'Alīzādah, 154; T. T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Great Qan Möngke in China, Russia and the Islamic Lands* [Berkeley, 1989], 204).
[199] Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 88.
[200] Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 88–91. For women warriors see pp. 164–6 below.
[201] *ZK*, 153; JZA 1996, 81–2; *XLSYJ*, 187. [202] *ZK*, 153; JZA 1996, 82.
[203] *LS*, 34/397; WF, 559–60; *ZK*, 153.

doubtful whether a Qara Khitai soldier could present a similar arsenal. First, the list seems to portray an ideal picture that did not necessarily materialize in the last days of the Liao dynasty.[204] Second, while each soldier was supposed to provide his own weapons, he was not necessarily responsible for producing them himself. Liao soldiers could purchase weapons from the well-developed weapon industry, centered in the eastern parts of the country near the rich iron mines of Liaoning, where skilled Liao Chinese and Bohai subjects were employed.[205] As will be explained below, there is no evidence that the Qara Khitai had a similar industry in Central Asia. Nor is it clear how much of this production was indeed available at Kedun, the westernmost Liao outpost, from where Dashi's troops emerged. Third, most of Dashi's troops were not Khitans but Turks and Mongols, and it is doubtful whether they produced the same armaments. Last but not least, even if the Qara Khitai did possess similar armaments, there is no indication that they surpassed the weaponry of their Muslim rivals, who had their own military industry.[206]

In trying to estimate the sources for weapons production in the Qara Khitai territory, it may be noted that iron ores were available near Farghāna and Shāsh, and in lesser amounts near the Chu river not far from the Qara Khitai capital;[207] lead and copper were mined in Farghāna, Ushrūsana and the mountains near Bukhara and Balkh.[208] Bukhara was indeed famous for its production of steel and was the seat of weapons workshops in the Mongol period.[209] Many small-scale sites of metallurgical production (although not necessarily for weapons manufacturing) were found, e.g., near Shāsh, near Talas and near the Issyk Kul,[210] all in or near the central territory of the Qara Khitai. None of these centers, however, originated in the twelfth century, nor were they especially developed at that period. Another source of a tribal weapons industry was the Yenisei area, held by the Qara Khitai from the mid-1130s but not after 1175.[211] In this region, twelfth-century broadswords, sabers, spears, axes, bows and arrows, as well as a few iron and wood coats of armor, helmets and shields have been unearthed.[212] In the pre-Qara Khitai

[204] See, e.g., *SC*, 11/1a, describing the events of 1122, from which it is clear that only a small portion of the army wore armor, as was true even in earlier Liao wars (WF, 531). For Liao weapons found in Mongolia (mainly arrowheads, spears and a few items of armor for men and horses) see I. S. Khudiakov, *Vooruzhenie Tsentral'no-Aziatskikh kochevnikov v epokhu rannego i razvitogo srednevekov'ia* (Novosibirsk, 1991), 73–88.

[205] WF, 141–4; Qi Xia et al., *Liao Xia Jin jingji shi* (Hebei, 1994), 70–3.

[206] See, e.g., Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 93 for Khwārazmian weaponry.

[207] E. Ashtor et al., "Ma'din," *EI2* 5 (1986), 965, 971; D. I. Vinnik et al., "Raboty na Issyk Kule," *AO* (1977), 568–70; anon., *'Ajā'ib al-dunyā*, 530.

[208] Qazwīnī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 203, tr., 194; Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 48.

[209] Ashtor et al., "Ma'din," 971; Waṣṣāf, *Ta'rīkh-i Waṣṣāf (Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-a'mār)* (Tehran, 1959–60), 68; Biran, *Qaidu*, 86.

[210] V. A. Bulatova et al., "Rabota Tashkentskogo arkheologicheskogo otriada," *AO* (1969), 411–12; *ZK*, 125.

[211] Juwaynī, 2:88, tr. Boyle, 356; *JS*, 121/2637.

[212] I. S. Khudiakov, *Vooruzhenie eniseiskikh Kyrgyzov* (Novosibirsk, 1980), 46, 58, 65, 77, 100, 102, 111–12, 118, 128–30, 133.



period Shāsh was famous for its superb bows and arrows.[213] Another possible source of weapons was the Tangut kingdom, a Qara Khitai eastern neighbor that was famous for its high-quality weapons.[214] All those references do not suggest, however, any technological superiority on the part of the Qara Khitai.

The only likely mention of armor in the ranks of the Qara Khitai is the reference to the 200 warriors who initially followed Dashi to Kedun. They were *tie bing*, i.e., well-armed soldiers, probably armored.[215] After Dashi had received the 10,000 tribal warriors in Kedun, he provided them with (unspecified) arms,[216] probably from Kedun arsenals. In the battles in Central Asia the Qara Khitai used bows and arrows, swords, lances and daggers,[217] i.e., their weaponry was equal, if not inferior, to the armaments of their Muslim rivals.[218] Nothing suggests that their rivals were impressed by their weapons.

Siege machines were an important component of twelfth-century Central Asian weaponry. I did not find any positive evidence that the Qara Khitai ever used mangonels (*manjanīq*), or any other siege-breaking weapon. However, the frequent mentions of mangonels and ballistae (*'arādāt*) among Qara Khitai rivals, especially in Khwārazm, and even in their subject territories, as at Almaliq,[219] together with the fact that the Liao dynasty already had units of catapultiers,[220] suggest that the Qara Khitai possessed siege equipment. This is supported by the literarily and archaeologically attested heavy fortifications in many Central Asian towns, which the Qara Khitai had conquered.[221] Indeed, the sources portray the Qara Khitai breaking a hole in the wall of Andkhūd castle in 1204,[222] and besieging Tirmidh together with the Khwārazmians in 1205.[223]

Yet three anecdotes from the last years of the Qara Khitai imply the absence of regular siege-breaking weapons. When Güchülüg tried to subdue Kashgar soon

[213] 'Alī Akbar Dihkhuda, *Lughāt nāmah* (Tehran, 1971), 24:94–6. Yet the city is hardly mentioned in sources for the Qara Khitai period, when it lay in the fringes of the Western Qarakhanid state and was overshadowed by the city of Fanākit (L. V. Shiskina, *Drevniaia i srednevekovaia kul'tura Chacha* [Tashkent, 1979], 164–9).

[214] Kychanov (ed.), *Kodeks*, 2:225–7 (ch. 7, art. 440). Weaponry was among the merchandise whose export was theoretically prohibited in the state of the Xi Xia. Yet the Tangut codex of 1149–69 cited above describes the fines imposed on the messengers of Dashi and Xizhou for purchasing these restricted products.

[215] *LS*, 30/355. [216] *LS*, 30/356.

[217] Juwaynī, 2:57, 78, 92, tr. Boyle, 324, 344, 360; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 165a; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403.

[218] For the Khwārazmian army see Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 91; for the Ghūrid army see, e.g., Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386; K. C. B. Elliot, *The History of India as Told By its Own Historians* (New York, 1966), 2:204–43 (retrieving *Tāj al-Ma'āthir*).

[219] For siege-breaking weapons in Khwārazm see Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 91; also, e.g., Juwaynī, 1:82, 93, 102, tr. Boyle, 106, 119, 129; "Alfī," fols. 165b, 171a; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 144; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:382; for Almaliq, see Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135–6.

[220] WF, 519.

[221] See, e.g., Juwaynī, 1:71 (Khujand), 82 (Bukhara), 102 (Tirmidh), 2:92 (Balāsāghūn), tr. Boyle, 92, 106, 129, 360; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 1:280 (Uzgand). For archaeological records see, e.g., *ZK*, 125, 152; Pikefu, "Hala Qidan," 126.

[222] Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324. [223] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:231.

after his usurpation in 1211, he did not break its walls, but instead burnt the crops in its fields for three or four years until hunger forced the city to surrender.[224] Güchülüg was also unsuccessful in his efforts to break into Almaliq, which was defended by mangonels and ballistae.[225] Even before Güchülüg's time, when in 1211 the people of Balāsāghūn closed the city gates before the returning Qara Khitai army, the Qara Khitai used elephants – not mangonels – to smash the city gates.[226]

The last episode portrays the use of another kind of weapon, unattested in the Liao army – elephants. The great value of elephants was demonstrated in the negotiations after the battle of Andkhūd, in which the Qara Khitai gained elephants from the vanquished Ghūrids.[227] The Ghūrids, like their predecessors the Ghaznawids, made frequent use of elephants, which they brought from their territories in India.[228] The elephants used by the Qara Khitai in 1211 were booty from Khwārazm, probably obtained after Muḥammad's victories over the Ghūrids in the first decade of the thirteenth century. The Qara Khitai kept the elephants because of their great prestige and their effectiveness in siege breaking, and despite the fact that these fodder-eating animals were not well suited for mobile nomadic warfare.[229]

## Campaign planning, tactics and strategies

Before starting an important campaign the Qara Khitai customarily sacrificed a gray ox and a white horse, thereby continuing an old Khitan tradition.[230] Also like the Liao their troops fought wearing a special battle dress.[231] In battle the Qara Khitai troops were divided into three contingents – left, right and central – as was also common in the Liao army and among the Qara Khitai rivals, the Ghūrids and Khwārazmians.[232] Each contingent had a commander and a vice-commander.[233] Apart from the commander and his second-in-command, at least in the campaign against the Jin, Dashi added two functionaries: the *dubushu* (chief administrator)

[224] Juwaynī, 1:48–9, tr. Boyle, 65; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 133; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:337.
[225] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 135–6. [226] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360.
[227] Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:187; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 122; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:297; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 171.
[228] C. E. Bosworth, "Fīl," *EI2* 2 (1965), 892–4; see, e.g., Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 241; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:265, 271; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 123.
[229] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360; this is in sharp contrast to Chinggis Khan's attitude to elephants. After his conquest of Samarqand, Chinggis acquired twenty elephants from the Khwārazmian army. Discovering that these animals need special fodder, he decided to set them free in the steppes, where they eventually starved to death: Juwaynī, 1:94, tr. Boyle, 120; Bosworth, "Fīl," 894.
[230] *LS*, 30/356, 357; see ch. 6. [231] Juwaynī, 1:49, 53, 2:84, tr. Boyle, 65, 70, 352.
[232] *LS*, 30/357; Juwaynī, 2:84, tr. Boyle, 351–2; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:136; "Alfī," fol. 212b; for the Liao, see, e.g., WF, 529; *SC*, 7/5b; for the rivals, e.g., Juwaynī, 2:84, tr. Boyle, 351–2; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:136; and Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 91, though he gives a more composite organization, including vanguard, rearguard and ambushing troops.
[233] *LS*, 30/356.



and the *dujian* (director-in-chief), both very common titles in the Liao tribal army and northern administration.[234]

Dashi's basic strategies of campaign organization are obvious in the instructions he gave to Xiao Wolila before sending him to the campaign against the Jin in 1134: "Take care to give rewards and punishments strictly and impartially; share with your troops fortune and misfortune; choose places rich in grass and water for encamping; before giving battle, take care to estimate the strength of the enemy; be ever conscious not to draw down upon yourself a defeat."[235] The first two instructions deal with the relationship between the commanders and their troops, which should be based on both solidarity and discipline. Those features were especially important when the commander was ethnically different from most of his troops.

The injunction to find places rich in water and grass stresses the importance of animals to the nomadic Qara Khitai. The animals assured their mobility, and indeed, many references to their troops specifically denote them as horsemen.[236] Although in the Liao period infantry was an important component of the campaigning army,[237] and even in his battles against the Song Dashi commanded a composite army of cavalry and infantry,[238] I did not find any specific reference to the use of infantry in the ranks of the Qara Khitai. Most of their auxiliary troops were probably mounted as well, as attested for the troops of Ilig Türkmen in 1158.[239] Although cavalry were dominant among the Qara Khitai rival armies as well, especially in Khwārazm, those armies also included a sizable infantry.[240]

A rational evaluation of the enemy troops before attacking was an essential element in Dashi's planning of campaigns.[241] Such estimates led him to attack Song forces in 1122 despite their huge numerical superiority, achieving a victory either by surprise attacks or by deception, such as beating drums to create the impression that reinforcements were coming, thereby causing the Song armies to retreat.[242] The same rational calculations convinced Dashi to avoid a hopeless confrontation against the Jin to which the reigning Liao emperor had been inclined in 1124. When the latter declined Dashi's suggestion "to nourish the army, wait for the right moment and then attack,"[243] Dashi decided to go westward, where he implemented this strategy. This is apparent not only in the incubation period at Kedun but also later. After his coronation at Emil in 1131/2, Dashi let his troops rest for a few years, coming into Balāsāghūn only after he was summoned by its ruler in 1134.[244] In similar fashion, Dashi came to Qatwān four years after

[234] *LS*, 30/357. For *dubushu* see, e.g., *LS*, 45/690, 692, 716, 717, 46/743, 744, 745, 747, 748, 752; for *dujian* see, e.g., *LS*, 45/690, 692, 694, 697, 700, 707, 708, 709, 711, 713.
[235] *LS*, 30/357; tr. in Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:217 (with changes).
[236] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 18:19; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 83; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 124b; 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 169; Qazwīnī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 257, tr. 250.
[237] WF, 519 ff. [238] *SC*, 7/5b. [239] Juwaynī, 2:15, tr. Boyle, 288.
[240] Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakov*, 88, 92. Yet for the important role of animals in the Khwārazmian army, see Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:331.
[241] *LS*, 30/356. [242] *SC*, 10/11a, 7/6a.
[243] *LS*, 29/349; *QDGZ*, 12/133; *SC*, 21/5a–b. [244] Juwaynī, 2:87–8, tr. Boyle, 355.

his earlier victory in the region, and only after he had been summoned by the local forces, either the Qarluqs or the Khwārazm Shāh, who provided him with information (partly biased) on the situation in Khurāsān.[245] When the Qara Khitai estimated that their force could not overcome their rivals, they preferred to refrain from war. This is apparent in the case of Xiao Duolubu, who avoided confrontation with Tekish in the late 1170s,[246] and seemingly also in the case of Ilig Türkmen, who in 1158, perhaps due to the initiative of the Qara Khitai, refrained from attacking Il Arslan's forces and instead concluded a peace agreement between the Khwārazmians and the Qarakhanids.[247]

As to military tactics, the usual way of acquiring information about the enemy was by using scouts or spies, a well-developed tactic in the Liao army, which Dashi certainly used against the Song.[248] There are several references to Qara Khitai scouts who were sent to spy on Jin troops.[249] In the west, the Qara Khitai commissioners and tax-collectors in their subject and vassal territories also served in this function. When, for example, Zhilugu in 1209 sent his vizier Maḥmūd Tai to Khwārazm to demand the tardy tribute, part of the latter's mission was to evaluate the Khwārazmian situation.[250] Spying, however, was a common feature in both China and Central Asia in the Qara Khitai period.[251]

The few tactical details known of Qara Khitai wars suggest that their advantages were their mobility and the coordinated action of their troops. The Qara Khitai's greatest victory, at Qatwān, was achieved after their separate contingents managed, acting together, to encircle the enemy troops, squeeze them into a narrow wadi and then defeat them.[252] The same tactic of encirclement also brought the Qara Khitai their second great victory, at Andkhūd.[253] This tactic, practiced in hunting campaigns, was used by the Liao and later by the Mongols.[254] In 1136 the Qara Khitai used the tactic of ambush against Jin forces and managed to cut off the Jurchens' provisions. Their better endurance of cold weather, as well as a fortunate mutiny in the Jin ranks, also contributed to their victory.[255] Although certainly a mobile mounted army, excelling in "riding and shooting,"[256] the Qara Khitai did not refrain from face-to-face battles, where they used swords and lances.[257]

Among the tactics that led to Qara Khitai defeats by their rivals were riverine warfare and night attacks. Despite the fact that the Qara Khitai were skilled in crossing rivers (they certainly crossed the Oxus and the Jaxartes), and that even in the Liao period Yelü Dashi did not hesitate to cross or block rivers,[258] they could

[245] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:313. See pp. 41–3.
[246] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:254.
[247] Juwaynī, 2:15, tr. Boyle, 288. [248] *SC*, 7/6a, 8/7a; WF, 530; JZA 1996, 83.
[249] *JS*, 50/1114, 88/1964. [250] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357.
[251] The most famous example is of course Chinggis Khan's merchants, who in 1218 were condemned as spies and executed by the Khwārazmian governor of Utrār (see, e.g., Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, 122–3). For Khwārazmian spies see Buniiatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 91; "Alfī," fol. 165b; for Liao scouts, see WF, 530; JZA 1996, 83.
[252] *LS*, 30/356; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 94.
[253] Juwaynī, 2:56–7, tr. Boyle, 324; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī 1:403.
[254] WF, 118, 119; Morgan, *Mongols*, 84–5. [255] *SC*, 137/7a.
[256] *LS*, 30/355. [257] Juwaynī, 2:56–7, tr. Boyle, 324. [258] *SC*, 7/5b.



not cope with the Khwārazmian techniques of riverine warfare. The Khwārazmian method was to open the river dikes at their enemy's approach, thereby flooding their way. This tactic was instrumental in convincing Xiao Duolubu to withdraw from Khwārazm in the late 1170s.[259]

A major setback occurred in 1198 when the Ghūrids attacked by night, catching the peacefully sleeping Qara Khitai completely unprepared for battle.[260] In Central Asia it was indeed customary to fight from morning till dusk,[261] yet at Qatwān at least the Qara Khitai fought for three days and nights,[262] and one combat in the battle of Andkhūd was fought from sundown till next morning.[263] The 1198 episode was an obvious case of negligence in protecting the camp.[264]

Another interesting insight into Yelü Dashi's strategy is given in the description of the battle of Qatwān, when after his defeat Sanjar had to pass through the Gürkhan's camp. Recognizing him, the Gürkhan refrained from stopping Sanjar, explaining that blocking the way of a defeated enemy would put the latter in dire straits and oblige him to launch a desperate battle that would lead to his victory.[265] This classical Chinese attitude[266] was indeed practiced by the Qara Khitai, who at Qatwān as well as at Andkhūd preferred reaching a settlement with their enemies, usually for lucrative compensation, instead of eliminating them.[267]

The well-organized, disciplined, mobile and sizable army of the Qara Khitai certainly deserved to be designated "a mighty wall," as the Muslim sources called it.[268] External features, such as its battle dress and mostly Chinese titles, probably added to its awesome appearance.

Although the Qara Khitai army retained features and terminology of the Liao military organization, the differences between the two armies are quite apparent. For example, the Qara Khitai army was based on light cavalry. Infantry and heavy cavalry, both important in Liao warfare, were much less significant (if used at all) in the ranks of the Qara Khitai. The main divisions of the Qara Khitai army were not along the *ordu*, tribal and militia lines, as in the Liao case, but between the standing tribal army, under direct control of the Gürkhan, and the auxiliary armies of the Qara Khitai subjects. The difference is apparent even in the form of titles, since two of the main commanding titles in the Qara Khitai army, Gürkhan

[259] E.g. Juwaynī, 2:20, tr. Boyle, 292. This tactic was also practiced quite effectively at the Khwārazmian siege of Ghūrid Herat: "Alfī," fol. 196b; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:307.
[260] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:136. [261] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324.
[262] Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 6:535. [263] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188.
[264] WF, 660. [265] Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 94–5.
[266] See e.g. *Sunzi bingfa*, in R. D. Sawyer (tr.), *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* (Boulder, 1993), 180, 182. Other of Dashi's strategies could also find precedents in this book; cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 273.
[267] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:95; Rāwandī, *Rāhat al-ṣudūr*, 174 (Qatwān); Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324 (Andkhūd), though it is unclear whether the agreement with the Ghūrids was initiated by the Qara Khitai or manipulated by their vassal Sultan 'Uthmān.
[268] Juwaynī, 2:79–80, 89, tr. Boyle, 347, 357; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 165a; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 139, 230; Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh*, 62:330; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71; see also Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:302.

and *tayangu*, were not in use at the time of the Liao. Nor were elephants used in north China. The dissimilarities between the Liao army and that of the Qara Khitai reflect the adaptations of the Qara Khitai to the Central Asian environment.

The Qara Khitai achieved victory over rival Central Asian armies not by fundamental superiority in weapon or numbers, but mainly by better coordination, mobility and discipline. Since their military advantage was technological rather than human, the personal authority of the Gürkhan, the army's chief commander and its organizer, was essential for keeping the army in good shape. Any decline in the Gürkhan's authority was dangerous in the decentralized and warlike environment of Central Asia, in which tribal leaders, "horse-stealers" and local dignitaries eagerly awaited the deterioration of the central power.

There were several differences between the Qara Khitai armies and their Muslim rivals, mainly the lack of the mamluk institution among the Qara Khitai, as well as the total or nearly total reliance on mounted warriors and less sophisticated siege warfare. However, the similarities were more apparent. Beyond the resemblance in terms of internal division and weaponry, the importance of the military in the society was another common feature: It is generally assumed that in nomadic societies, every member of the society was a potential soldier, but this seems to have been true also for the sedentary population in Central Asia, in which women, religious leaders and artisan civilians fought when the need arose.[269]

## The position of women

The high status of women in the Qara Khitai is demonstrated by the fact that two out of the five Gürkhans were women. The importance of the empress was a continuation of a notable Liao tradition, which began in the days of Yingtian, the charismatic wife of the Liao founder Abaoji (r. 907–26). After Abaoji's death, Yingtian refused to be buried with him, as the Khitan custom demanded. Instead, she cut off her right hand and had it placed in the coffin, while she survived and became an influential regent, the first in a line of dominant Khitan empresses.[270] The high position of women was also apparent in the Qara Khitai successor state of Kirmān, whose most famous ruler was the celebrated Qutlugh Terken (r. 1257–82),[271] about whom see below.

[269] For a good example, albeit from Khwārazm, see Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 519; for earlier and later examples of this phenomenon see Paul, *The State*, *passim*; Biran, *Qaidu*, 84.

[270] Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 68; WF, 543; H. Franke, "Women under the Dynasties of Conquest," in H. Franke, *China under Mongol Rule* (Aldershot, 1994), 25–6; Holmgren, "Ch'i-tan," 52.

[271] The queen received the title Qutlugh Terken after her marriage to Quṭb al-Dīn, the second ruler of the dynasty. Otherwise she was known as Terken Khatun, a name or title which designated many wives of various Turkic rulers of the eastern Islamic world (cf. the famous mother of Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh described on p. 144). Terken, originally perhaps a Khitan word, was roughly equivalent to "queen," while Khatun, deriving from Soghdian, means the wife of a ruler or lord (C. E. Bosworth, "Terken Khatun," *EI2* 10 [1999], 419). To avoid confusion, I am following Lambton in calling the queen Qutlugh Terken (Lambton, *Continuity*, 278).



According to the *Liao shi*, the Qara Khitai empresses, like those of the Liao, were merely regents, who reigned only temporarily, until their male children (or nephews) reached majority.[272] Both Qara Khitai empresses, however, were specifically nominated for the post by their predecessors: Tabuyan, the empress Gantian (r. 1143–50) by her husband, Yelü Dashi, and Pusuwan, the empress Chengtian (1164–77) by her brother, Yelü Yilie.[273] Moreover, when Empress Chengtian was deposed after reigning for thirteen years, she was replaced by Yilie's second son, Zhilugu. As there is no indication that Zhilugu was a minor upon his accession, his older brother must have been an adult before the scandal, but nevertheless he did not replace the empress immediately after reaching majority.[274] In fact, it is clear that the empresses functioned as rulers in their own right.[275] They had their own reign titles, a feature that no Liao (or Chinese) regent ever had;[276] they bore the titles Gürkhan and Dashi;[277] and they certainly determined the empire's internal and external policy.

Empress Gantian, for example, refused to surrender to the Jin in 1146,[278] and issued coins inscribed with her title.[279] Empress Chengtian certainly took important political and military decisions. She ordered the expulsion of the Qarluqs from Transoxania in 1163, and under her rule the Qara Khitai conquered Balkh from the Oghuz in 1165 together with the Western Qarakhanids;[280] defeated Il Arslan Khwārazm Shāh in 1171/2;[281] came to enthrone Tekish as his heir in late 1172;[282] and around 1177 accompanied Tekish's brother, Sulṭān Shāh, in a futile attempt to dethrone their rebellious protégé.[283] In the early 1170s and at least till 1175 the Qara Khitai also fought on their northeastern frontier against the (unidentified)

[272] *LS*, 30/357. [273] *Ibid.*

[274] *LS*, 30/357–8; cf. the refusal of the Kirmānid Qutlugh Terken to give up her crown to her son, although he had already made a name for himself as a renowned warrior, i.e., was certainly not a minor: Lambton, *Continuity*, 281.

[275] This is obviously how the Muslim sources treated them. See, e.g., Juwaynī, 2:88–9, tr. Boyle, 356–7; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85; Ghaffārī, *Jahān ārā*, 166; Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 241–2; Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūq nāmah*, 46; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 174; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:368.

[276] *LS*, 30/357. The only woman in Chinese history who had her own reign titles was Empress Wu, and she is the only one who ruled not as regent but as empress, establishing the short-lived Zhou dynasty (690–712). See R.W. L. Guiso, "The Reign of the Empress Wu, Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung (642–712)," in D. Twitchett (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 3: The Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (Cambridge, 1979), 290–332 and table 3, p. XVIII. Cf. Yang Fuji, *Liao shi shiyi bu*, *CSJC* ed., where Gantian's reign title is described as the first reign title of her son and successor, Yilie.

[277] *JS*, 121/2637; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:254; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 214a–b; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a.

[278] *JS*, 121/2637; and see ch. 2.

[279] WF, 664; *ZK*, 122. The coins were inscribed with the empress's temple name (i.e., Gantian) and not with her reign title as was the norm in Chinese coinage, and as was also practiced under Yelü Dashi.

[280] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:310–11; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 162a; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 334–5.

[281] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:375; Juwaynī, 2:16–17, tr. Boyle, 289 (who dates the battle to 1170, cf. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 336); Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 148; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:365; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 243b; "Alfī," fol. 93a; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:52.

[282] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:377; Juwaynī, 2:17–18, tr. Boyle, 290.

[283] E.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:378–9; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:254; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:308; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244a–b; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a.

Yebulian tribe.[284] The empresses' central role in making these decisions is apparent at least in the Khwārazmian cases.[285]

The high position of women in the Qara Khitai realm was closely connected to the unique marriage pattern of the Liao Khitans, which the Qara Khitai at least partially retained. According to this pattern, male descendants of the royal Yelü clan took their wives exclusively from the Xiao consort clan, and Yelü females also married exclusively Xiao males.[286] Tabuyan, Dashi's wife, who was also his paternal cousin, belonged indeed to the Xiao clan, and Yelü Pusuwan was married to Xiao Duolubu.[287] The leading positions that the Xiao males held in the Qara Khitai army and administration certainly elevated the status of their female relatives. In the case of Pusuwan, her father-in-law, the most decorated Qara Khitai general Xiao Wolila, was probably instrumental in ensuring her accession. The coup d'état he organized thirteen years later also demonstrated his unique position in the empire, although this time it was not in favor of his daughter-in-law.[288] Pusuwan's reign also witnessed the unique position of the empress's husband, who kept his former title of *fuma*, imperial son-in-law. Although Juwaynī stated that the husband was "handling the affairs" for the empress (*mudabbir al-umūr*), other sources made clear that the empress held superior authority. She sent her husband to perform military errands, and she granted him titles.[289]

As Wittfogel and Feng correctly stated, however, the limited numbers of the Yelü and Xiao among the Qara Khitai probably resulted in a less exclusive marriage pattern than was prevalent under the Liao.[290] In any case, towards the end of the dynasty the Qara Khitai were obliged to modify their traditional marriage pattern due to their declining political situation. Even before this, political marriages occurred among the Qara Khitai despite running counter to the Yelü–Xiao marriage pattern, as marriage alliances were an integral part of Central Asian politics.[291] Yelü Dashi married Qarakhanid and Khwārazmian princesses, although the unique position of the Xiao empresses precluded any real influence of a non-Khitan woman, who could not win the status of empress.[292] Like the Liao, the Qara Khitai were not enthusiastic about giving their daughters in marriage: Sultan 'Uthmān of Samarqand was very offended in the early thirteenth century when the Gürkhan refused his request to marry a Qara Khitai princess. Yet when the Gürkhan's position declined a few years afterwards 'Uthmān did receive a princess to ensure his loyalty.[293] A Qara Khitai princess was also promised to Muḥammad

[284] *JS*, 121/2637. [285] Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244b.
[286] Holmgren, "Ch'i-tan," 56–7.
[287] *LS*, 30/357; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85. Marriages between cousins were common in the Liao royal house. See J. Holmgren, "A Question of Strength: Military Capability and Princess-Bestowal in Imperial China's Foreign Relations (Han to Ch'ing)," *Monumenta Serica* 39 (1990–91), 67.
[288] See ch. 2.
[289] *LS*, 30/357–8; Naṭanzī, "Ta'rīkh," fol. 174a; Mūsawī, "Ta'rīkh-i khayrāt," fol. 244a–b.
[290] WF, 671.
[291] Lambton, *Continuity*, 258 ff.; Holmgren, "A Question of Strength," 84; P. B. Golden, "Nomads and their Sedentary Neighbors in Pre-Chinggisid Eurasia," *AEMA* 7 (1987–91), 72.
[292] Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 87; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 18:19; Holmgren, "A Question of Strength," 52.
[293] Juwaynī, 2:122, 124, tr. Boyle, 393, 395.



Khwārazm Shāh in return for his support for the Qara Khitai against Güchülüg. After Güchülüg deposed the Gürkhan, Muḥammad still demanded the princess, but Güchülüg responded favorably to Zhilugu's begging him to defend "his most precious treasure," and did not send the princess,[294] perhaps keeping her for his own son. Before all this Güchülüg was chosen as son-in-law of the Gürkhan despite his non-Khitan (apparently non-Xiao) origin. Güchülüg himself married his son to a Qara Khitai princess,[295] perhaps aspiring to have the Naiman supplant the Xiao as the Qara Khitai consort clan.

The pattern of Yelü and Xiao marriage was not preserved among the Qara Khitai of Kirmān, but they concluded a series of political marriages with neighboring *atabeg*s of Yazd, Fāris and Luristān, as well as with the Chaghadaid and Ilkhanid Mongols.[296] The marital connections of the empresses remained an important factor in determining the amount of their authority. The special position of Qutlugh Terken's daughter, Pādshāh Khatun, for example, was closely related to her being the wife of two Ilkhans, Abaqa (r. 1265–80) and his son Geikhatu (r. 1291–5). As the Ilkhans were the overlords of Kirmān, Pādshāh Khatun could look after her mother's interests, and after the latter's death she demanded, and received, the right to rule Kirmān on her own, but had to give it up when her husband was dethroned by Baidu.[297]

The tendency to marry upward, i.e., taking a spouse of the former generation, as in the case of Pādshāh Khatun's second marriage, was apparent among the Qara Khitai of Kirmān: Baraq Ḥājib forced Jalāl al-Dīn, his former Khwārazmian lord, to marry him to his mother,[298] and Quṭb al-Dīn, Baraq's nephew and successor, married Baraq's concubine, later Qutlugh Terken.[299] This practice was common in Inner Asia and is attested among the Khitans, the Khwārazm Shāhs and the Mongols.[300]

Rashīd al-Dīn's description of Güchülüg's marriage stresses the independent position of Qara Khitai women. According to him it was Zhilugu's eldest wife, Güresbü, who ordered Güchülüg to be brought to the Gürkhan's court. Her daughter, who saw Güchülüg at court and fell in love with him, married him three days afterwards, meaning that she could choose her mate herself.[301] Whether the reason for that was her strong will or her father's declining political position it is hard to determine, but two other anecdotes also illustrate the strong-mindedness of Qara Khitai women. The first deals with one of Dashi's first wives. She was left behind in 1123, when Dashi escaped from the Jurchen camp, and she stood boldly in front of the Jin commander, refusing to betray her husband's whereabouts. The furious

[294] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 44. [295] Huang Jin, *Jinhua Huang*, 28/12a–13a.
[296] Lambton, *Continuity*, 276–87. [297] Lambton, *Continuity*, 281–2, 286–7.
[298] WF, 672; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:379–80. [299] WF, 672.
[300] For the Khitans see WF, 207, 211; J. Holmgren, "Imperial Marriages in the Native Chinese and Non-Han States, Han to Ming," in R. Watson and P. Ebrey (eds.), *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society* (Berkeley, 1991), 81–2; for the Ilkhanid Mongols, see, e.g., J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Ilkhans," in *CHI5*, 380; for the Khwārazmians, see Ibn al-Athīr, 11:380; "Alfī," fol. 96a.
[301] Rashīd, *Sbornik letopisei*, 180, cited in Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 62, n. 5.

commander decided to punish her by marrying her off to a lesser tribe member. She proudly refused and paid with her life for her boldness.[302] Another determined woman was a noble Qara Khitai lady who set her heart on the ruler of Sijistān, a captive of the battle of Qatwān who was taken to the Gürkhan's court. The lady made the ruler of Sijistān "a near and dear friend," whatever this means. She took care of all his needs and thanks to her efforts he was released from custody and returned to his land.[303]

Very few details regarding gender relations among the Qara Khitai, apart from the royal house's arrangements, are mentioned in the sources. Ibn al-Athīr stated that Yelü Dashi did not prohibit adultery.[304] Ḥaydarī understood that several Qara Khitai men could share one woman, as did the Mazdakids.[305] This sounds incompatible with the high position of women described above and with the firm ban on adultery in the Liao period.[306] Yet those statements might reflect certain sexual customs apparent among the Qara Khitai. Among the twelfth-century Shanxi Uighurs, for example, the women had relations with Han men before marrying, and bore many children. Only when she approached the age of thirty might a woman be matched with her own kind, and her price in the marriage market was determined according to the number of men she had already been with: the more the better.[307] Twelfth-century Tanguts first offered their daughters to the state preceptor, the leading Buddhist priest in the Xi Xia realm, and only afterwards dared to marry them off.[308] Dunnell ascribed these practices to the influence of Tantric Buddhism, which was practiced among the Khitans as well. Therefore, a similar custom might have existed among the Qara Khitai and form the basis for Ibn al-Athīr and Ḥaydarī's assertions. Whatever freedom the women enjoyed before marriage, however, after wedlock they were supposed to remain faithful, as proved by Pusuwan's deposal due to her love affair.[309]

The Gürkhan's function as the empire's military leader and the unique tradition of military authority among Liao empresses suggest that Qara Khitai women took part in warfare. In China, Yingtian, Abaoji's wife, had her own private army of 200,000 horsemen, with whom she organized and led campaigns against rival tribes.[310] Other empresses also took part in Liao campaigns,[311] and even in the very last days of the Liao, before evacuating Yanjing in 1122, Empress Xiao Defei, the widow and successor of the ephemeral emperor Yelü Chun (d. 1122), was willing to fight to the finish against the Jurchens.[312]

[302] *SMJW*, 1/7a and see p. 24.
[303] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:276. [304] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:86.
[305] Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 242. The Mazdakids were called after Mazdak, the leader of a revolutionary social-religious movement in Sassanid Iran, that was active in the late fifth to early sixth centuries. The name was also ascribed to several rebellious groups in the eighth to ninth centuries in Muslim Iran, which shared several characteristics with the former Mazdakids, mainly the sharing of women. See M. Guidi [M. Morony], "Mazdak," *EI2* 6 (1991), 949–52.
[306] WF, 465. [307] *SMJW*, 1/3b; Dunnel, "Tanguts," 228. [308] Dunnell, "Tanguts," 228–9.
[309] *LS*, 30/357; cf. Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 584 on the sexual freedom of married Qarluq women.
[310] Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 68; WF, 543; Franke, "Women," 25–6.
[311] Holmgren, "Ch'i-tan," 52; WF, 201–2. [312] *QDGZ*, 12/129; *SC*, 12/3b–4a.



Despite the documented involvement of the Qara Khitai empresses in political and military decisions, the only positive evidence for women as warriors in the ranks of the Qara Khitai comes from a period following the dissolution of their empire. When Baraq Ḥājib left Khwārazm and headed to India around 1220, he went through Kirmān. Entering the province, Baraq and his Khitan and Turkic troops were attacked by the local governor of the castle of Juvāshīr. Realizing that "the moment had arrived," Baraq "ordered the women also to put on men's clothes and prepare for battle."[313] It is possible that women sometimes fought in Qara Khitai ranks, but this was not mentioned by the Muslim sources either because, as attested above, the women wore male dress and were not easily distinguishable from the men,[314] or because female warriors were not an uncommon phenomenon among the Turks in twelfth-century Central Asia, as will be discussed below. Nevertheless, none of this suggests that women routinely fought in the ranks of the Qara Khitai.

While the position of Qara Khitai women was indeed uniquely high, there were several contemporary assertive Turkic women who shouldered political and military responsibilities, although they did not enjoy the formal status of ruler or regent. The most famous was Terken Khatun, the wife of Tekish Khwārazm Shāh and Muḥammad's mother, whose confused ethnic origin was discussed above. There is not much information on Terken Khatun's activities during Tekish's reign, but when she discovered that her husband was having an affair with a slave girl, she attacked him in the bath, leaving him blind in one eye.[315] In Muḥammad's reign, however, Terken Khatun played a decisive political role, enjoying the loyalty of her relatives in the army and the administration. She had her own separate court and officials, and her power was greater than that of her son.[316] The two sometimes cooperated, such as when Terken Khatun organized the Khwārazmian defense against Ghūr in 1204, while Muḥammad was away.[317] More often they had different interests, for example, when Terken Khatun decided to pay tribute to the Qara Khitai in 1209 while her son was more willing to rebel.[318] Terken Khatun's strained relations with her unfavored son contributed to the collapse of the Khwārazmian state with the advance of the Mongols.[319] Earlier Khwārazmian queens, such as Sulṭān Shāh's mother, were also politically and militarily active.[320]

Sanjar's wife took part in the battle of Qatwān, where she was taken prisoner by the Qara Khitai and carried off into captivity.[321] After being released, she held military authority even after her husband had been captured by the Oghuz, since in 1148/9 she ordered the destruction of the citadel of Bayhaq.[322]

[313] Juwaynī, 2:212, tr. Boyle, 477.
[314] For a manifestation of this phenomenon among the Mongols, see Ibn al-Athīr, 12:378.
[315] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:301–2. [316] Juwaynī, 2:198, tr. Boyle, 466 (and 79, 124, 339, 349).
[317] 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 88. [318] Juwaynī, 2:87, tr. Boyle, 358.
[319] Lambton, *Continuity*, 276. [320] See ch. 2.
[321] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:81; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 173.
[322] Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīkh-i Bayhaq*, 469.

Later on she was instrumental in finding a solution, which enabled her husband to release himself from the Oghuz's prison.[323] The mother of the Saljūq sultan Arslan (d. 1175) also took part in military campaigns and saw to the needs of the army.[324]

The widow of Ozar Khan of Almaliq temporarily took over her husband's duties after his sudden death. She organized the city's defense against Güchülüg. Enlisting warriors and installing ballistae and catapults around the city walls, she managed to overwhelm the Naiman prince.[325] Soon afterwards, however, Chinggis Khan appointed Ozar's son to succeed his father and the lady disappeared from the political scene.[326]

The wife of the *atabeg* of Ṭabaristān took part in her husband's wars against Tekish in the 1190s,[327] and the wife of Tekish's commander, Mayāchuq, played a leading role in Tekish's 1197–8 campaign against the remnants of the Saljūq forces in Iraq. Mayāchuq deployed the center of his army against the Iraqi forces, but was defeated. When, however, the Iraqi forces were pursuing the Khwārazmian men, Mayāchuq's wife led the Khwārazmian women against them. The Khwārazmian women wore armor, and each of them is said to have driven off fifty Iraqis. The women attacked the Saljūq forces from behind, enabling Mayāchuq to redeploy his forces. Together the Khwārazmians won the battle, and the women celebrated the victory in "an unimaginable slaughter."[328]

Apart from the behavior of Mayāchuq's wife, this last episode reflects the role of the "rank-and-file" women in the warring forces. This is also attested for the women of the Oghuz, who captured Sanjar in 1148,[329] and for thirteenth-century Mongol women.[330] The Muslim religion of the Khwārazmian, Saljūq, Kirmānid, Ṭabaristānid and perhaps also Oghuz women did not prevent their active participation in warfare and politics.[331] None of the noble women mentioned above, however, reigned in her own name and all of them gained prominence due to their dead or living husbands.

In the sphere of rulership, the thirteenth century saw the unprecedented phenomenon of several female Muslim queens, many of whom had some Qara Khitai

[323] "Alfī," fol. 48a; Sanjar's wife is also famous for building the caravanserai known as Ribāṭ-i Sharaf in Khurāsān. See C. Hillenbrand, "Seljuq Women," in C. Balim-Harding and C. Imber (eds.), *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis* (Istanbul, 2000), 156.

[324] Rāwandi, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 299–300; Hillenbrand, "Seljuq Women," 161.

[325] Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 136. [326] Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 75.

[327] Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 153–4. [328] Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 396.

[329] Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 587. [330] Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 61:59.

[331] Even at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad there were women who took part in warfare, but usually they played a very marginal role. According to Muslim law, warfare is not obligatory for women as it is for men; it was allowed in time of need, but even then it was recommended that women should cook for the warriors or look after the injured instead of actually fighting (M. K. Haykal, *al-Jihād wa'l-qitāl fī al-siyāsa al-shar'iyya* [Beirut, 1993], 2:1013–24). Muslim legal literature written under the Qara Khitai acknowledged the status of women warriors including queens: Qāḍī Khān, *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān* (Cairo, 1892–3), 3:581, 583; al-Marghīnānī *al-Hidāya*, in al-'Aynī, *al-Banāya fī sharḥ al-hidāya* (Beirut, 1980), 661, 662. For theoretical views of the position of women in Saljūq times see Hillenbrand, "Seljuq Women," 146–9.



connection. The obvious examples are those of the Kirmānid queens, Qutlugh Terken and her daughter, Pādshāh Khatun. Qutlugh Terken, a noble Khitan who had been captured in the early thirteenth century, sold as a slave in Iṣfahān and became a concubine of the Khwārazmian prince Ghiyāth al-Dīn, later became a concubine of the founder of the Kirmānid dynasty, Baraq Ḥājib. After his death she married his successor and nephew, Quṭb al-Dīn. After the latter's demise in 1257, Qutlugh Terken succeeded him first as a regent to their minor sons, and later as a ruler in her own right – although her children had by then reached adulthood.[332] Qutlugh Terken's daughters continued to be influential in Kirmānid affairs after her death, and one of them, Pādshāh Khatun, ruled Kirmān in her own right (1292–5).[333]

The tradition of daughters as legitimate successors, which goes back to the Qara Khitai empress Chengtian, was continued in several cases in the Muslim world of the thirteenth century: In 1237/8 Sultan Rāḍiyya (r. 1237/8–40), the daughter and nominated successor of the Delhi sultan Iltutmish, was crowned in Delhi by her father's mamluks. Jackson ascribed her nomination to the Qara Khitai background of an influential section of Iltutmish's mamluks,[334] and if Iltutmish was indeed a Qara Khitai the connection is even more obvious. Abish Khatun, who ruled over Fāris (1264/5–86/7), was a granddaughter of Bībī Turkan, daughter of Baraq Ḥājib and Qutlugh Terken. Both her grandmother and her mother were influential in Fāris, and her daughter, who was married back into the Kirmānid dynasty, also played an important role in later succession struggles there. Like the Kirmānid queens, the rise of Abish Khatun was closely connected to her relations with the Ilkhanids.[335]

I did not, however, find any Khitan connection in the case of another famous Turkic Muslim queen, Shajar al-Durr, who reigned as the sultan of Egypt for three months, May to July 1250, following the death of her husband, the Ayyūbid sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb.[336] Around the same time the wives of the Mongol Qa'ans served

[332] Lambton, *Continuity*, 278–87; G. R. G. Hambly, "Introduction," in G. R. G. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety* (London, 1998), 13–18; B. Üçok, *Femmes turques souveraines et régents dans les états islamiques* (n.p., 1983), 61–70; see also the somewhat baffling discussion in F. Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam* (Cambridge, 1994), 100–1. The most detailed source for the history of Qutlugh Terken is the anonymous *Ta'rīkh-i shāhī* written for her daughter Pādshāh Khatun.

[333] On Pādshāh Khatun see Üçok, *Femmes turques*, 71–86; Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens*, 101–2. When Pādshāh Khatun lost her position in Kirmān due to the deposition of her husband, the Ilkhan Geikhatu, she was supposed to be replaced by her niece, the wife of the new Ilkhan Baidu (March–September 1295). Yet Baidu was deposed before he managed to complete her appointment and his successor, Ghazan, who did not have a Kirmānid wife, nominated a male candidate to the throne (Kirmānī, *Simṭ 'al-ulā*, 69–79).

[334] P. Jackson, "Sultan Raḍiyya bint Iltutmish," in G. R. G. Hambly (ed.), *Women, in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety* (London, 1998), 181–98; Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, 65; see also Üçok, *Femmes turques*, 25–40; Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens*, 89–97.

[335] Kirmānī, *Simṭ 'al-ulā*, 56; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, 87–101; Lambton, *Continuity*, 272–6.

[336] L. Ammam, "Shajar al-Durr," *EI2* 9 (1997), 176; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, 41–60; Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens*, 98–9.

as influential regents,[337] and other noble Mongol women also played important roles in Mongol politics.[338]

The unique position of Qara Khitai women, then, was not strange to the Turkic and Mongol rulers inside and outside their empire.

## Hunting

Hunting was a popular royal sport among the Qara Khitai. When a Jin envoy came in 1146 to ask the Qara Khitai to submit to the Jurchens he met Empress Gantian in her hunting grounds,[339] and in 1211 Güchülüg captured Zhilugu while the latter was hunting.[340] Among both the Liao Khitans and the Mongols, hunting was also used as a kind of military training, in which the technique of encirclement, among others, was practiced.[341] As this tactic was prevalent among the Qara Khitai,[342] hunting probably fulfilled the same function for them too. Apart from entertainment and military training, hunting had a certain economic function, which was probably more relevant to the rank-and-file nomads than to the royal house. The chase supplied the nomads with extra meat and saved them from having to kill their own animals.[343] The skin and fur of the game served domestic needs (such as clothes) or were used for export.[344] Moreover, as the chase was the royal sport across the whole of Eurasia, that was also common among other Central Asian rulers, such as the Saljūqs, the Qarakhanids, the Qarluqs and the Khwārazm Shāhs, as well as the Mongols,[345] it could serve as a common bond and a meeting ground for the ethnically diverse elites within the Qara Khitai realm.

[337] Allsen, "The Rise," 381–4 (Töregena, 1241–6); 388–94 (Oghul Qaimish, 1248–51). Since Mongol succession customs did not allow minor or feeble members to ascend the throne, the Mongol regents took their deceased husbands' posts only till the nomination of a new Qa'an, and not until the heir apparent reached majority, as was the case in China or in the Muslim world. Therefore, the period and scope of the regency were usually more limited. See Holmgren, "A Question of Strength," 75.

[338] See, e.g., M. Rossabi, "Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family," in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift für Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), 153–80. One can add to that several regents of non-nomad origin: In the eleventh-century Song empire, for example, there were three active dowager empresses who also took the field; and the same is true for the two Tangut dowager empresses of the same century (Yang Lien-sheng, "Female Rulers in Imperial China," *HJAS* 23 [1960–1], 47–61; Dunnell, *White and High*, 17–18.) The power of those regents is often ascribed at least partially to Liao influence.

[339] *JS*, 121/2637. [340] *LS*, 30/358.

[341] WF, 118, 119; Morgan, *Mongols*, 84–5; *ZK*, 122. [342] See p. 158 above.

[343] Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 76: when Chinggis Khan tried to persuade the ruler of Almaliq to refrain from hunting he compensated him with a thousand sheep; Cf. Kāi Kā'ūs b. Iskandr b. Qābūs, *Qābūs nāmah* (ed. R. Levy, London, 1951), 52–4, tr. R. Levy, *A Mirror for Princes: The Qābūs nāmah* (London, 1951), 83–5, where it is clearly stated that (among the Iranians) "for a prince the object in hunting must be the sport and not the meat."

[344] Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 7:238; The many animals in Central Asia made hunting a profitable occupation. Among them were, e.g., foxes, rams, wild goats, wolves and squirrels (Karaev, *Istoriia*, 202).

[345] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:262; "Alfī," fol. 58b; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83; Juwaynī, 2:4, tr. Boyle, 279 (Saljūqs); Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 83; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 90 (Qarakhanids); Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 76; Qarshī, *Mulkhaqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 136 (Qarluqs); Juwaynī, 1:71, 2:198, tr. Boyle, 92, 417–18 (Khwārazm); Morgan, *Mongols*, 84–5; *YS*, 1/13 (Mongols).



Another characteristic of Inner Asian hunting in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was its dangerous nature. Hunting was a favorite opportunity for eliminating political rivals, and Zhilugu was by no means the only ruler who met his fate in his hunting grounds. The Qarakhanid ruler of Transoxania Qadr Khan was captured by Sanjar's men in the middle of a chase;[346] in 1129–30 Sanjar was saved by the skin of his teeth from the envoys of the Qarakhanid Arslan Khan, who were sent to assassinate him while hunting.[347] Chinggis Khan caught Güchülüg's uncle, the Naiman leader Boluyu, while the latter was hunting.[348] When Ozar Khan, the ruler of Almaliq, surrendered to Chinggis Khan in 1212, the latter "bade him to refrain from the chase lest he should unexpectedly become the prey of other huntsmen." Unable to resist the sport, however, Ozar was soon afterwards seized in his hunting grounds by Güchülüg's men.[349]

It is hard to reconcile the function of hunting as large-scale military training with its being such a favorable opportunity for the disposal of political opponents. Indeed, there was a difference between collective hunting, a large-scale campaign to which the ruler invited his vassals and local governors,[350] and individual hunting, on a much smaller scale,[351] which provided the best chance to catch an unsuspecting rival. Yet Güchülüg used 8,000 men to capture Zhilugu, thereby suggesting that a person could be surprised even in a large-scale chase. Dangerous as it was, hunting was an important part of the political culture of Central Asian rulers,[352] and a part that the Qara Khitai certainly shared.

## Conclusion

Identified by Muslim sources as another kind of Turks, the Qara Khitai indeed had a lot in common with Central Asian nomads and former nomad Turks and the partly Turkicized sedentaries.[353] First of all, they shared the coexistence of nomad and sedentary populations in the same state, a typical situation in both Liao China and Central Asia. The position of the nomads as rulers or overlords was also not an innovation on the Central Asian scene, as manifested by the famous example of the Western Qarakhanid ruler Shams al-Mulk (r. 1068–80), who continued to lead a nomadic existence, erecting his tents in the neighborhood of his capital, Bukhara, only in winter. Like the Qara Khitai, he did not let his nomadic preferences disrupt his care for the interests of his sedentary subjects. His accompanying troops, for

[346] Rashīd/*Saljūq*, 83; Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 90.

[347] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83; Juwaynī, 2:4, tr. Boyle, 279. [348] *YS*, 1/13.

[349] Juwaynī, 1:57, tr. Boyle, 76; see also Qarshī, *Mulkhqāt al-ṣuraḥ*, 136; p. 81.

[350] Juwaynī, 2:149, tr. Boyle, 418 for Khwārazm.

[351] See N. T. Münküyev, "A Mongolian Hunting Practice of the 13th Century and the Buryat Terms *zeegete aba* and *aba khaidag*," in W. Heissig et al. (eds.), *Tractata Altaica* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 421–3 and the examples cited there.

[352] For a full treatment of hunting in Eurasia see Allsen's forthcoming study.

[353] For the Turkicization of the Central Asian sedentary population at this stage see Golden, *Introduction*, 228–9.

example, were kept under strict discipline, and he ordered the soldiers to keep to their tents lest they disturb the city population.[354]

Recognizing the needs of the sedentary population and effectively controlling the nomads for most of their rule, the Qara Khitai achieved economic prosperity, which certainly contributed to their acceptance as legitimate rulers in Central Asia. The consolidation of their position was further facilitated by the common features they shared with the Central Asian Turks. The Qara Khitai shared social values, such as the important role of warfare in everyday life; the high position of women; and the high position of merchants.[355] They shared certain aspects of political culture, such as the importance of marriage alliances, the policy of holding subjects hostage,[356] the practice of hunting as a royal sport and certain aspects of military organization. These similarities do not preclude the uniqueness of the Qara Khitai, but they certainly smoothed their later assimilation into the ranks of the Mongols and Turks after the dissolution of their empire. In their imperial period, these common features, together with the image of China in Central Asia, significantly contributed to the legitimization the Qara Khitai gained in their new environment despite their different ethnic and religious background. Indeed, throughout their rule the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam, a key factor in the culture of many of their subjects, sedentary and nomads alike. The relationship between the Qara Khitai and Islam will be the subject of the next chapter.

[354] 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 85; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 315; Karaev, *Istoriia*, 204; WF, 663.

[355] This is attested by the position of Maḥmūd Tai, a merchant who became the vizier of the last Gürkhan: see p. 126. It is of course in contrast with the low position of merchants in Confucian China (apart from the reign of the Mongols: for merchants in Yuan China see E. Endicott-West, "Merchant Associations in Yüan China: The *ortog*," *Asia Major* 3, 2 [1989], 127–54).

[356] See p. 116.

CHAPTER 6

# Islam

## Introduction

The Qara Khitai conquest was the first to bring the whole of Islamic Central Asia, including important religious centers such as Bukhara and Samarqand, under non-Muslim rule. Moreover, unlike their predecessors in Central Asia, the Qarakhanids, and their successors, the (Chaghadaid) Mongols, the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam. Nevertheless, the relationship between these "infidel" rulers and their Muslim subjects was mainly harmonious, and did not correspond to the classical Islamic concept of international relations. According to Islamic law, the world is divided into two realms, the abode of Islam (*dār al-Islām*) and the abode of war (*dār al-ḥarb*) or of unbelief (*dār al-kufr*), and the relationship between them is one of hostility. Theoretically the Muslims should fight the non-Muslims in holy war (*jihād*) until the whole of the abode of war becomes part of the abode of Islam.[1]

A striking illustration of the fact that the relationship between the Qara Khitai and the Muslims did not fall into these categories is the common image of the Qara Khitai in Muslim literature as a mighty wall or dam that protected Islam from its eastern enemies, such as the Mongols.[2] This notion is forcefully elucidated in Juwaynī's description of a Muslim scholar who, contrary to the general rejoicing in Khwārazm after a great Muslim victory over the Qara Khitai in 1210, sat sad and silent in a corner of his house. When Juwaynī's cousin, allegedly the source of this anecdote, asked him why he grieved he explained:[3]

[1] M. Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore, 1966), 10–20; Khadduri, *War and Peace*, 155; A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford, 1981), 201–2; Haykal, *al-Jihād wa'l-qitāl*, 1:660–74.

[2] Juwaynī, 2:79–80, 89, tr. Boyle, 347, 357; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 165a; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 139, 230; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:330; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:71; Ibn Abī-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, 23; see also Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:302.

[3] Juwaynī, 2:79–80, tr. Boyle, 347.

> Beyond these Turks[4] are a people stubborn in their vengeance and fury, and exceeding Gog and Magog. And the people of Khitai[5] were in truth the wall of Dhū al-Qarnayn[6] between us and them. And it is unlikely, when that wall is gone, that there will be any peace within the realm or that any man will recline in comfort and enjoyment. Today I am mourning for Islam.

While this anecdote certainly seems anachronistic, it is significant that in a period in which Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn mobilized tens of thousands of Muslims in the name of *jihād* in Syria and Palestine, Central Asia was mostly indifferent, if not sympathetic, to its infidel conquerors, portrayed as the defenders of Islam.

This chapter surveys the relationship between the Qara Khitai and the Muslims inside and outside the empire. It aims to explain how the Qara Khitai managed to win legitimacy among the Muslims despite their continuing adherence to non-Muslim ways. Part of the answer has been given in previous chapters. But here the focus will mainly be on the religious policy of the Qara Khitai and the religious implications of their general policies in the Islamic context, and to a lesser extent on the political conflicts among their potential enemies. After a short discussion of Güchülüg's religious policy, the final section tries to explain why the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam. But first we need to know what religions the Qara Khitai followed and what was the religious composition of their empire.

## The religions of the Qara Khitai

Except for the fact that they did not embrace Islam, next to nothing is known about Qara Khitai religion. The scanty references suggest that, like the Liao Khitans, the Qara Khitai continued to adhere to the Khitan tribal religion as well as to Buddhism. They also maintained the Chinese imperial tradition, which had a Confucian dimension. Moreover, due to the diverse religious situation in their empire and to their religious tolerance, medieval (and modern) authors tend to ascribe other religious identities to them as well.[7]

Muslim authors stress the non-Muslim identity of the Qara Khitai: The Qara Khitai are often called "the infidel Turks";[8] Juwaynī compared them to the people of Pharaoh, the biblical and Qurānic infidels,[9] while Nasawī declared that the Khwārazm Shāh found no difference between Chinggis Khan, the Gürkhan and Güchülüg, all of whom practiced *shirk* (polytheism).[10] Nonetheless, Jūzjānī, after

[4] I.e., the Qara Khitai. See pp. 143–6. [5] I.e., the Qara Khitai. See ch. 4 (p. 93).
[6] Dhū al-Qarnayn, "He of the Two Horns," was an epithet applied to Alexander the Great, who was said to have constructed a wall of brass and iron to keep out Gog and Magog. Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 347, n. 21.
[7] JZA 1996, 119; and see below.
[8] E.g., Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl*, 275; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:84, 85; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:15; Ḥusaynī, *Akhbār al-dawla*, 93; Dhahabī, *'Ibar*, 4:98; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 63:220. See pp. 143–4 for the original terms.
[9] Juwaynī, 2:93, tr. Boyle, 361. [10] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 48; cited in WF, 671; *ZK*, 157; JZA 1996, 122.



relating the generous attitude of the Gürkhan towards Islam, reported that he might have secretly converted to Islam, but immediately added the reservation *Allāh a'lam* (God knows best).[11]

The adherence of the Qara Khitai to the Khitan tribal religion is apparent in the continuation of sacrifices. Before two important campaigns, leaving Kedun to go west around 1130 and organizing the campaign against the Jin in 1134, Yelü Dashi sacrificed a gray ox and a white horse to heaven, earth and the ancestors, or just to heaven.[12] The Liao emperors used to perform such offerings before any important military mobilization. The gray ox and the white horse symbolized the Khitans' ancestors, and were later regarded as incarnations of the god of Heaven and the goddess of Earth, whose approval the sacrifice was meant to secure.[13] The eminence of Heaven in the religious world of the Qara Khitai is manifested in Dashi's reaction after the failure of the campaign against the Jin: "Heaven does not favor me, this is its will,"[14] and by the popularity of the character "heaven" (*tian*) in Qara Khitai ruling titles, a phenomenon which also characterized Liao titles.[15] Juwaynī described the Qara Khitai as fire worshipers.[16] Although he may have used the expression as a general term for pagans, it probably reflects reality, since the god of Fire had an important place in the pantheon of the Liao Khitans, and lighting great fires was a part of their important rites such as investitures or royal funerals.[17] Whereas fire worship and animal sacrifice belonged to the Khitan tribal religion, both the prominence of heaven and the importance of the ancestors are meaningful in the Confucian context as well.[18] This is not surprising given that Yelü Dashi held the *jinshi* degree, awarded to those who passed the final stage of the Confucian examinations, and his dialogues with the Song commanders in 1122–3 prove his familiarity with basic Confucian texts.[19]

When Güchülüg married the Gürkhan's daughter, she persuaded him to renounce his Christianity and turn to idolatry (*but parastī*),[20] a term usually used with reference to Buddhism in thirteenth and fourteenth century texts.[21] Buddhism

[11] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; cited in WF, 671; *ZK*, 156; JZA 1996, 122. The information originally in Ibn Khaldūn, *'Ibar*, 5:227 (whence Marquart, "Volkstum," 238 and *ZK*, 157) that the son of Yelü Dashi was called Muḥammad is based on an erroneous reading of Ibn al-Athīr's text. See Ibn al-Athīr, 11:85.
[12] *LS*, 30/356, 357; cited in WF, 670; *ZK*, 157; JZA 1996, 122.
[13] *LS*, 34/397, 51/845; WF, 268; Franke, "Forest People," 405–6; for the Khitan tribal religion see Ren Aijun, *Qidan*, 112–30.
[14] *LS*, 30/357. [15] See table 1. [16] Juwaynī, 2:77, tr. Boyle, 344.
[17] WF, 18, 214, 218, 223, 239, 267, 274, 279. [18] JZA 1996, 122.
[19] *LS*, 30/355, 4; *SC*, 7/4a–b; see also ch. 4 (pp. 93–4), 108 adherence to the Chinese imperial tradition, which is closely connected to Confucianism.
[20] Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 64, n. 11, citing Rashīd al-Dīn (text unavailable in Karīmī or 'Alīzādah's editions). Cf. Juwaynī, 1:48, tr. Boyle, 63 in which the lady is just a Qara Khitai maiden, not a princess; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 353 according to whom Güchülüg, after marrying a Qara Khitai wife, forsook his fathers' religion and worshiped strange gods; WF, 671; *XLSG*, 135; JZA 1996, 121.
[21] See, e.g., the examples in Doerfer, *Elemente*, 2:648–51; also 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," in Barthold, *Turkestan-texts*, 83.

was indeed the high religion of the Liao Khitans,[22] and it is therefore quite probable that the Qara Khitai royal family retained it even in Central Asia, in which Buddhism prevailed at least among the Gaochang Uighurs.[23] The many Buddhist sites in Semirechye, the region of the Qara Khitai central territory, were once adduced to confirm this supposition.[24] Recent Russian and Qyrghyz scholarship, however, while continuing to debate the exact dating and attribution of some of these monuments, dates the Buddhist monuments of Semirechye to a much earlier period (seventh–tenth centuries).[25] Kāshgharī's account of profaning and destroying (presumed Buddhist) idols is good evidence that Buddhism was still practiced in Central Asia at the time he wrote, the late eleventh century, though probably weakened by Muslim attacks.[26] Some of the Buddhist sites might have still been active in the twelfth century, or at least could easily have been restored and used by the Qara Khitai.[27] Yet recent scholarship has found no evidence of Buddhist building activity by the Qara Khitai, in contrast to the patronage given to it under the Liao.[28] If not a result of the dearth of sources, or of political archaeology,[29]

[22] For Buddhism under the Liao see S. M. Grupper, "Qitan Cakravartin Monarchy and its Qara-Qitai and Mongol Legacies" (unpublished paper, 1991), *passim*; WF, 291–309; Feng Jiqin, *Qidan*, 331–45; Liu Pujiang, "Liao Jin de fo jiao zhengzhi ji qi shehui yingxiang," in *LJSL*, 304–22; K. K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, 1972), 409–12; Huang Zhenyun, *Liao*, 247–68. The Khitans adhered mainly to the Huayin school and to Tantric Buddhism (Feng Jiqin, *Qidan*, 345; Ch'en, *Buddhism*, 411).

[23] See n. 59 below for references.

[24] Bernshtam, *Tian'-Shania*, 169–72; Bernshtam, *Chujskaia dolina*, 47–55; Bernshtam, *Chujskogo kanala*, 25–6, 44; cited in Viatkin *Istoriia Kirgizii*, et al. (eds.), 140–1; whence JZA 1996, 121; *XLSG*, 135.

[25] V. D. Goriacheva and S. I. Peregudova, "Buddijskie pamiatniki Kirgizii," *VDI* 216, 2 (1996), 167–89; V. A. Litvinskij, "Eschë o buddijskikh pamiatnikakh Semirech'ia," *VDI* 216, 2 (1996), 190–3; B. I. Staviskij, "A. N. Bernshtam i izuchenie buddijskikh pamiatnikov Srednej Azii," in K. I. Tashbaeva et al. (eds.), *Iz istorii i arkheologii drevnego Tian'Shania* (Bishkek, 1995), 176–86; B. I. Staviskij, "The Fate of Buddhism in Middle Asia," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 3–4 (1993), 119–21; B. I. Staviskij, *Sud'by buddizma v Srednej Azii* (Moscow, 1998), 111–33. See these references also for descriptions of the different Buddhist sites.

[26] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:270 (art. 173); cf. Goriacheva and Peregudova, "Buddijskie pamiatniki," 167.

[27] The literature cited in n. 25 does not tackle the question of whether the Buddhist sites in Semirechye were still active after the tenth century, apart from the mention of the burning of the two temples of Akbeshim in the eighth century, and Goriacheva and Peregudova's conclusion that Kāshgharī's text quoted above proves that Buddhism ceased to be practiced in Central Asia after the Islamization of the Qarakhanids (Goriacheva and Peregudova, "Buddijskie pamiatniki," 167). Yet it seems strange that a dynasty closely familiar with Buddhism, which (accidentally?) located its capital in a region with a rich Buddhist cultural tradition, would do nothing to restore some of those monuments and use them, or at least let its Buddhist subjects (e.g., the Uighurs) do so, just as it allowed the Nestorians to establish a bishopric in Kashgar and Nawākit (see pp. 178–9 below).

[28] See n. 22; also Shatzman-Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture*, 31–187. Characteristic Liao Buddhist monuments were constructed of timber. If the Qara Khitai continued this tradition, it is not surprising that nothing of their buildings survived the destruction inflicted on Semirechye in the fourteenth century by the contesting Mongol factions.

[29] Bernshtam's opinions were refuted in close conjunction with the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet dispute in the mid-1960s. The dating of several Qyrghyzstani monuments was defined in the Hermitage catalogue of the 1983 exhibition of Qyrghyzian art and culture (A. Kanimetov et al. [eds.], *Pamiatniki kultury i isku'sstva Kirgizii* [Leningrad, 1983], 62 ff.). The strained relations between China and the Soviet Union at that time probably contributed to the complete omission of Qara Khitai



this may reflect the fact that Buddhism was much less effective as a legitimizing factor in mostly Islamic Central Asia than in north China.[30]

Ibn al-Athīr asserts that the first Gürkhan (Yelü Dashi) was a Manichaean.[31] The only support for this claim is Ḥaydarī's report that Zhilugu was called Mani,[32] but this name can also originate in the Sanskrit Buddhist term for jewel.[33] Ji Zhongan argued that Qara Khitai religious tolerance fostered the reemergence of a Central Asian Manichaean community, which later treated the Gürkhan as one of its adherents.[34] The problem is that there is no concrete evidence for the existence of such a Manichaean community in the Qara Khitai empire. Moreover, even in Gaochang, a Manichaean stronghold in the ninth century, Manichaeism was becoming marginal to Buddhism from the late tenth century onwards.[35] Nor was this creed prevalent among the Liao Khitans.[36] I suggest that Ibn al-Athīr's assertion derives from his classification of the Gürkhan as Chinese.[37] A prevalent assumption in Muslim literature of the tenth to fourteenth centuries was that most of the Chinese were Manichaeans.[38] This idea seems to be based on another prevalent notion in Muslim literature (but not in Mani's standard biography), that when he was persecuted by the Sassanids, Mani escaped to China, where he attracted many followers.[39] It may also echo the eighth-century conversion of the Uighurs to Manichaeism, as the tenth–twelfth-century Muslim writers hardly distinguished between Uighurs and Chinese.[40] Mani's reputation as a great painter and calligrapher may also have played a role, as these are characteristics that Muslim authors usually ascribe to the Chinese,[41] and so may Muslim acquaintance with the coastal Manichaean

(i.e., Chinese) culture from the catalogue. For Chinese political manipulation of the Qyrghyzstani Buddhist monuments in the 1980s see A. Forte, "An Ancient Chinese Monastery Excavated in Kirgiziya," *CAJ* 38 (1994), 46–7.

[30] For Buddhism as a legitimizing factor in Han and non-Han Chinese dynasties see, e.g., Dunnell, *White and High*, 18–26.

[31] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83. [32] Ḥaydarī/Schefer, 243.

[33] S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Tübingen, 1992), 226.

[34] JZA 1996, 121.

[35] *SS*, 490/14110 ff.; Chao Huashan, "New Evidence of Manichaeism in Asia: A Description of Some Recently Discovered Manichaean Temples in Turfan,"*Monumenta Serica* 44 (1996), 297–8; Lieu, *Medieval China*, 242; H. J. Klimkeit, "Buddhism in Turkish Central Asia," *Numen* 37 (1990), 60; cf. Goriacheva and Peregudova, "Buddijskie pamiatniki," 183 and Litvinskij's objection in Litvinskij, "Eschë."

[36] WF, 214. [37] Ibn al-Athīr, 11:83, 84, 86 and see p. 93.

[38] S. H. Taqīzādah and A. A. Shīrāzī, *Mānī wa-dīn-e u* (Tehran, 1957), 206 (Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya*), 481 (*Ḥudūd al-'ālam*); Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *I'tiqādāt firaq al-muslimīn wa'l-mushrikīn* (Cairo, 1938), 88; Marwazī/Minorsky, 17, tr. 17; 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," fol. 247a; Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 53; see also Ibn Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 349, 351.

[39] Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, *I'tiqādāt*, 88; Taqīzādah and Shīrāzī, *Mānī*, 422 (Firdawsī), 486 (Gardīzī), 495 (*Fārsnāmah*), 501 (*Bashfnāmah*), 525 (Mīrkhwānd), 528 (Khwāndamīr). For Mani's biography, where this notion is not found, see, e.g., G. Gnoli, "Mani," *Encyclopedia of Religions* 9 (1987), 159; Lieu, *Medieval China*, 70–85, 106–14.

[40] For the Uighur conversion, see, e.g., Mackerras, 329–35; for the confusion between Uighurs and Chinese in Muslim literature see pp. 98–9, 177.

[41] Gnoli, "Mani"; see p. 97.

community in south China that survived at least until the fifteenth century.[42] Above all, Manichaeism and Buddhism sounded similar to outsiders.[43]

Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī and Mīrkhwānd claimed that Güchülüg's wife, the daughter of the last Gürkhan, was a Christian.[44] This detail does not appear in sources written before the fifteenth century,[45] and seems to originate in a confusion between (or an attempt to make sense of) Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn's information about Güchülüg's religious policy (about which see below). The exact version of Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn's material cited above unquestionably shows that the Qara Khitai were not Christians. Yet, in the twelfth century they were taken to be Christians by the Crusaders in Palestine. The great victory of the non-Muslim Qara Khitai over Sanjar's Muslim forces in Qatwān (1141) was understood as a great Christian achievement and gave a boost to the legend of Prester John, the priest-king who was about to come to the aid of his coreligionists from his remote kingdom in Asia.[46] Originating in the Christians' automatic equation of non-Muslim with Christians, the Qara Khitai connection to Prester John may also derive from the sizable Nestorian community within their realm, which benefited from their religious tolerance. In order to strengthen the basis of this legendary connection, some scholars have tried to prove that the Qara Khitai were Christians, but so far without conclusive results.[47]

The scattered evidence suggests that there was no state religion in the Qara Khitai realm. Moreover, such information as we have relates to the ruling house, and nothing is known about the religion of the rank-and-file Khitans. They were probably influenced by the religious diversity in the Qara Khitai empire.

## The religious composition of the Qara Khitai empire

Although Islam was the principal religion in most regions of the Qara Khitai realm, their empire also included sizable Buddhist and Nestorian communities, as well as a Jewish one.

[42] For Manichaeism in China after its banning in 843 see Lieu, *Medieval China*, 263–304; S. N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China* (Leiden, 1998), 126–76.

[43] For the mutual influences of Manichaeism and Buddhism in China and Central Asia see Lieu, *Medieval China*, 243–62; H. J. Klimkeit, "Jesus' Entry into Parinirvāna: Manichaean Identity in Buddhist Central Asia," *Numen* 33 (1986), 225–40.

[44] Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, *Muqaddima-i ẓafar nāmah* (Tashkent, 1972), fol. 37b; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:73.

[45] V. V. Barthold, *Zur Geschichte des Christentums in Mittel-Asien bis zur mongolischen Eroberung* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1901), 58, 65.

[46] For Prester John see p. 45 and the references there.

[47] In the late nineteenth century Zarncke and Opert claimed that Yelü Dashi was a Christian since the name of his son, the third Gürkhan, Yilie, was taken to be a Chinese form of the name Elias (F. Zarncke, *Der Priester Johannes* [Leipzig, 1879], 134–5; *ZK*, 155; Barthold, *Christentum*, 55–8; cf. Jiang Weilu,"Cong Tabuyan renming shishuo tan Liao he Xi Liao chao de nongye shengchan," *Shehui kexue jikan* 1982/2, 105, who adduces many examples of the occurrences of this name [transcribed in various forms in Chinese] by the Turks, Uighurs, Khitans and Mongols regardless of any religious orientation). In 1973, Dauvillier described the Qara Khitai as partly Christian and partly sun-worshipers (J. Dauvillier, "Les provinces chaldéennes 'de l'exterieur' au Moyen Age," in *Melanges F. Cavallera* [Toulouse, 1948], 291; and see also H. J. Klimkeit and I. Gillman, *Christians in Asia before 1500* [Richmond, 1999], 229).



*Islam:* Muslim raids into Transoxania began in the mid-seventh century, and a permanent presence was established in Transoxania in the early eighth century. By the ninth century the region was already an important Islamic center. The Sāmānids (875–999) contributed significantly to the expansion of Islam in and beyond their realm,[48] and were instrumental in achieving the Islamization of the Qarakhanids in the mid-tenth century. With the Qarakhanids Islam became the dominant religion in Balāsāghūn, Khotan and Kashgar, i.e., in Semirechye and the Tarim basin.[49] Epigraphic and literary evidence attest that those regions remained primarily Muslim during Qara Khitai rule as well.[50] Many Muslims were also apparent among the Uighurs. This is attested by the early tenth century: In the reign of the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–32), the governor of Khurāsān wanted to kill the Manichaeans who had escaped to his realm from the persecutions of Iraq. When the King of China – that is, the lord of the Tughuzghuz, who is identified as the Uighur ruler of Qocho (Gaochang), himself a Manichaean – heard about this he threatened that if the governor killed the Manichaeans he would do the same to the Muslims of his lands, who were more numerous than the Manichaeans in Khurāsān.[51] In the last days of the Qara Khitai empire, one of the Idi-qut's messengers dispatched to Chinggis Khan to announce the Uighur submission was called 'Umar Oghul,[52] evidence that he was a Muslim. Reports from the Mongol period furthermore confirm the existence of a considerable number of Muslims among the Uighurs in the mid-thirteenth century.[53] By 1203, and certainly in 1218, there were Muslim merchants even among the Mongols, where they enjoyed great respect.[54] Under the Qara Khitai Islam for the first time prevailed in the regions of Qayaliq and Almaliq, where the Qarluq rulers embraced it before the early thirteenth century.[55] Qara Khitai rule, then, did not limit the expansion of Islam. On the contrary, the large size of the empire and its relative peace facilitated further Muslim infiltration into Inner Asia.

*Buddhism:* Once a major religion along the Silk Road, Buddhism was gradually driven out of Central Asia due to both Islamic expansion and the decline of the Buddhist tradition in India, its original homeland.[56] In the eleventh century, Bīrūnī, the great Khwārazmian polymath and a renowned authority on Indian matters,

[48] For the early Islamic presence in Central Asia, see Barthold, *Turkestan*, ch. 2; Gibb, *Arab Conquests*, *passim* (till 751 CE); R. N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia* (Cambridge, 1993), ch. 5; Golden, "The Karakhanids," 348–54.

[49] For Qarakhanid Islamization see Golden, "The Karakhanids," 357–8; D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (Philadelphia, 1993), 19–20 and his references in n. 8.

[50] E.g., Nastits, "Balasaguna," *passim*; Nastits, "Burana," *passim*; Juwaynī, 1:53–6, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 70–4, 360.

[51] Ibn Nadīm *Fihrist*, 337, tr., 2:802–3; Lieu, *Medieval China*, 228.

[52] Rashīd/Alizādah, 338.

[53] P. Jackson and D. Morgan (eds. and trs.), *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck* (London, 1990), 150; *Majma'al-ansāb*, 229 recorded 50,000 Muslims in Uighur Besh Baliq in the mid-thirteenth century. However, Mongol transfer policies might have been partially responsible for that, too.

[54] Juwaynī, 1:59–60, tr. Boyle, 77–9; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākiha*, 235; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 140; Allsen, "Mongolian Princes," 86–94.

[55] Juwaynī, 1:56–8, tr. Boyle, 74–6; Barthold, *Türken*, 131.

[56] J. H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford, 1993), 131–3.

could supply only a very confused and fragmentary description of Buddhism,[57] and towards the end of the eleventh century Kāshgharī told of the smashing and profaning of Buddhist idols by the Muslim Qarakhanids.[58] During the reign of the Qara Khitai Buddhism remained the chief religion in Gaochang,[59] and was probably practiced by the Qara Khitai royal house in their capital. A Buddhist monk served as the Qara Khitai governor in Gaochang.[60] In 1219, however, Chang Chun stated that there were no Buddhist priests west of Changji, on the northern slopes of the Tian Shan.[61] Yelü Chucai, a Buddhist–Confucianist who visited Central Asia in the early 1220s, praised Yelü Dashi for promoting culture and (Buddhist) religion in Central Asia.[62] He also described the presence of Buddhist heresies in the Western Regions (i.e., Central Asia) and referred to the presence of Buddhist priests "in the dark valleys of the Far West," a rather vaguely defined location that probably refers also to the Western Regions in general.[63] There is also evidence that the old Buddhist caves in Qara Tepe near Tirmidh, where there was at least a Qara Khitai commissioner, were still visited in pre-Mongol times (though not necessarily by Buddhists).[64] In 1253 Rubruck found three active temples and a flourishing Buddhist community in Qayaliq,[65] to the northwest of Changji, which Chang Chun had not visited, which might have been active in Qara Khitai times. Nonetheless, despite the supposed adherence of the Qara Khitai ruling strata to Buddhism, there is no evidence of a large-scale Buddhist revival in their realm.

*Christianity:* A sizable and long-standing Nestorian community dwelt in the Qara Khitai empire. As early as the eighth century a church was built in Akbeshim,[66] near the future Qara Khitai capital, and the Nestorian cemeteries unearthed near Tokmaq, i.e., in the central territory of the Qara Khitai, included more than 600 Syriac epitaphs dated between 858 and 1345. While most of the epitaphs date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, some were carved during the reign of the Qara Khitai.[67] In the second half of the twelfth century the Nestorian patriarch Elias III Abū Ḥalīm (1179–90) established the bishopric of Kashgar and Nawākit (near the Issyk Kul, in the Qara Khitai central territory). The

[57] Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya* (Leipzig, 1923), 206, tr. E. Sachau, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879), 188–9; A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Buddhism in Islamic Times," *EIr* 4 (1990), 496.

[58] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:270 (art. 173).

[59] *Chang Chun*, 28, 29; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 80–1, 83; *XLSG*, 134–5.

[60] *YS*, 124/3049; Ouyang Xuan, *Guizhai Wenji*, 11/5a, and see p. 127.

[61] *Chang Chun*, 29; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 83; *XLSG*, 135.

[62] YLCC-*ZR*, 12/260; JZA 1996, 138.

[63] YLCC-*XYL*, 113/1b, 121/8b, tr. 17, 28.

[64] B. I. Staviskij and T. Mkiatychnev, "Qara-Tepe in Old Termez: On the History of the Monument," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 11 (1997), 229.

[65] Jackson and Morgan (eds.), *Rubruck*, 151–2, 153–6.

[66] J. Dauvillier, "L'archéologie des anciennes églises de rite chaldéen," *Parole de l'Orient* 6–7 (1975–6), 376.

[67] Chwolson, "Grabinschriften," (1886), 1–30, (1890), 1–22; Nau, "Tombales," 3–35; Dauvillier, "'Extericur'," 290; Hunter, "Syriac Christianity," 366–7; Barthold, *Türken*, 99–100; Barthold, *Studies*, 1:106.



patriarch appointed the bishop Jean to this post and, after his death, the bishop Sabhriso.[68]

There were also Christians in the Qara Khitai subject territories. The bishopric of Kashgar was mentioned above. In mid-eleventh-century Khotan there were two churches, one inside the town and the other at its outskirts.[69] It is doubtful whether in 1155 the Qarakhanid ruler of Khotan was a Nestorian,[70] but a Christian presence there is attested by the local Christian monks who took part in the religious debate Güchülüg initiated around 1214.[71] Nestorians also prevailed among the Uighurs and among the Mongolian tribes, including those who had close relations with the Qara Khitai such as the Naiman, Kereyid and Merkid.[72] In the western part of the Qara Khitai empire, Samarqand served as a Nestorian metropolis at least until the thirteenth century.[73]

*Judaism:* Judaism was the only religion not found among the Uighurs and the (eastern) Khitans,[74] yet Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, a Qara Khitai contemporary, enumerates it as one of the religions of Turkestan,[75] and Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler who visited Iran and perhaps also Samarqand in the 1150s, confirms his claim. Benjamin reported that in Samarqand there was a large community of 50,000 Jews, which included many learned and rich people and was headed by "the Prince Rabbi 'Obadiah." In Khwārazm (Khīwa) Benjamin found 8,000 Jews, and those two communities probably had close connections with the flourishing Jewish community in Iran, which he also described.[76] However, there is indirect evidence that shortly before 1152, the Jewish community in Jand was exterminated by its ruler Kamāl al-Dīn, a Khwārazmian vassal.[77] For about the same time, in 1155, we are told – although by a late and doubtful source – that Jews dwelt in the much more eastern region of Khotan and Aksu, in modern Xinjiang, where they served in the Khotanese armies and some of them even held princely positions.[78]

[68] 'Amrū b. Mutā, *Akhbār faṭārika kursī al-mashriq* (Rome, 1896–9), 110–11, 126; cited in Barthold, *Christentum*, 58; Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 287; Hunter, "Syriac Christianity," 366; for the location of Nawākit see Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 288–9 and Goriacheva and Peregudova, "Buddijskie pamiatniki," 183, who identified Nawākit with Krasnaya Rechka.

[69] Gardīzī, *Zayn*, 270; Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 288.

[70] Thus according to the late seventeenth-century Turkish *Tadhkira* of Maḥmūd Karam Kābulī, cited in E. Blochet, "La conquête des états nestoriens de l'Asie Centrale par les Shiites. Les influences chrétiennes et bouddhiques dans le dogme islamique," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 5 (1925–6), 25–6; cited in Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 287.

[71] Juwaynī, 1:53, tr. Boyle, 70.

[72] 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," fol. 247a; Marwazī/Minorsky, 17, tr. 17; *Chang Chun*, 29; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 82; Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 307–9; Barthold, *Türken*, 128; Allsen, "The Rise," 321–4.

[73] 'Amrū b. Mutā, *Akhbār faṭārika*, 126, 132; Hunter, "Syriac Christianity," 366; Dauvillier, "'Exterieur'," 284–5.

[74] Marwazī/Minorsky, 17, tr. 17; 'Awfī, "Jawāmi'," fol. 247a.

[75] Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, *Ta'rīkh*, 43.

[76] Benjamin of Tudela, *Masa'ot Rabbi Binyamin mi-Tudela (The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela)* (London, 1840), 81–8, tr. 128–36. For a general discussion of Jewish presence in Central Asia see M. Zand, "Jewish Settlements in Central Asia in Ancient Times and in the Early Middle Ages," *Pe'amīm* 35 (1988), 4–23.

[77] Zand, "Jewish Settlements," 19.

[78] Maḥmūd Karam Kābulī (seventeenth century), *Tadhkira*, in Blochet, "La conquête," 25–6.

*Daoism*: According to Chang Chun, a Chinese Daoist monk who was summoned to Central Asia by Chinggis Khan in 1219, there were Daoist priests among the Uighurs in Besh Baliq but not west of Changji.[79]

## Qara Khitai policy: religious tolerance and its implications

The Qara Khitai practiced the religious tolerance characteristic of Inner Asia.[80] Reflecting the belief that each religion is an effective means of communication between the divinity and men, this policy certainly fitted a situation in which the conquerors were a small minority in a multi-religious empire.[81]

The only concrete evidence of the Gürkhan's religious policy is the letter he wrote around 1142/3 to his governor in Bukhara, cited in the *Chahār maqāla*, a manual for courtiers composed in the 1160s in Samarqand. Before leaving Transoxania after his victory at Qatwān (1141), Yelü Dashi entrusted Bukhara to his representative *Atmatigin, a Muslim Turk, instructing him to work in close cooperation with the local *ṣadr*, Aḥmad son of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Aḥmad was the local head of the dominant Ḥanafī school, and his family, known as the *Āl-i Burhān* (the Burhān family), had led the city in the fields of religion and administration since the early twelfth century.[82] When the Gürkhan left, however, *Atmatigin, who "saw a clear field," began to oppress the local population. A Bukharan delegation went to meet the Gürkhan in Semirechye to seek redress. After hearing their complaints, the Gürkhan wrote a letter to *Atmatigin:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Let *Atmatigin know that although far distance separates us, our approval and displeasure are near at hand. Let *Atmatigin do what Tāj al-Islām Aḥmad commands, and [let] Aḥmad do what [the Prophet] Muḥammad commands. Farewell.[83]

Apart from demonstrating the Qara Khitai familiarity with Muslim formulas, this important piece of evidence proves beyond doubt that the Qara Khitai gave the Bukharan Muslims a free hand to practice their religion. It also attests to the preservation of Muslim authority, in this case that of a Muslim scholar, under the new Qara Khitai rulers. Moreover, the letter clearly equates observation of Muslim law, i.e., Muḥammad's commands, with preventing oppression, i.e., maintenance of justice. These points will be discussed below.

[79] *Chang Chun*, 28, 29; Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 80, 83 n. 3. Walley, doubting the practice of Daoism at such a distance from China, suggested that Chang Chun's Daoist priests were actually Manichaeans (Li Zhichang, *Travels*, 80, n. 5).

[80] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:95, and see below. For other instances of religious tolerance see J. P. Roux, "La tolerance religieuse dans l'empires Turco-Mongols," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 203 (1986), 131–68.

[81] Roux, "Tolerance," 131, 140.

[82] See pp. 124–5.

[83] Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 25; cited verbatim in the fourteenth-century Muḥammad b. Hindūshāh Nakhjawānī, *Dastūr al-kātib fī taʿyīn al-marātib* (Moscow, 1964–71), 1:116–17; WF, 671.



### *Freedom of worship*

Many references attest to the uninterrupted continuation of Muslim religious life under the Qara Khitai. Al-Samʿānī (d. 1166), who spent some years in Qara Khitan Transoxania (1153/4–56/7),[84] provides first-hand evidence that many Muslim scholars flourished there. The scholars he met in Bukhara, Samarqand and in smaller Transoxanian towns and villages specialized mainly in the fields of *fiqh* (Muslim law) and *ḥadīth* (Muslim tradition), but they also wrote Qurʾānic studies and commentaries, works on Arabic grammar and literature, and sermons. Al-Samʿānī himself took part in study sessions (*majālis*), dictated *ḥadīth* in the mosque, encountered circles (*ḥalqas*) of shaykhs in the mosques, and came to study in the houses of eminent scholars.[85] He also mentioned the presence of Sufi (Muslim mystics) shaykhs, who won great respect.[86] The same picture of developed and uninterrupted Islamic scholarship is also apparent from Samarqandi tomb inscriptions dated to the Qara Khitai period.[87] Bukhara remained an important Islamic center during its subjugation to the Qara Khitai, especially for legal studies, as proved by its 4,000 or 6,000 paid Muslim legal scholars (*fuqahāʾ*).[88] Qara Khitai Transoxania also retained close connections with other Islamic centers through pilgrimage (*ḥajj*),[89] and through scholarly travels for the acquisition of knowledge (*fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*) both from Transoxania and to it.[90] An especially close connection existed between the intellectual communities of Khurāsān and Transoxania.[91]

Closely connected to the Transoxanian community was the Muslim center of Farghāna, which in the Qara Khitai period produced prominent Ḥanafī legal scholars such as Qāḍī Khān and al-Marghīnānī.[92] Late twelfth–early thirteenth-century

[84] Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 1:145, 2:95.

[85] Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 1:141, 145, 156, 2:95, 332, 3:547, 5:17, 19, 27, 104; al-Samʿānī, *al-Taḥbīr fī al-muʿjam al-kabir* (Baghdad, 1975), 1:534, 2:86–7, 172, 234–6, 261, 272, 350; see also al-Qurashī, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafiyya* (Cairo, 1993), 2:314.

[86] Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 1:217; see also *Qurashī, Jawāhir*, 2:323.

[87] Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie*, 132–210 (inscriptions 25–115); for curriculum see esp. 157, 161, 186.

[88] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68; Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 510.

[89] Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 6:588; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 50:295; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt al-zamān*, 8/2, 529; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 57, 59; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jamiʿ*, 202; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257 (recording the *ḥajj* of the Bukharan *ṣadr* in 1204); Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, 2:314 (*ḥajj* of the preacher of Samarqand in 600/1203–4; 3:284); Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar Burhān al-Dīn, "Laṭāʾif al-adhkār liʾl-ḥuḍḍār waʾl-suffār," MS Institut vostokovedeniia AN TadzhSSR, 845, *passim* (*ḥajj* of the Bukharan *ṣadr* in 552/1157–8); Balkhī, *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, 370 (*ḥajj* of *Shaykh al-Islām* Abū Bakr al-Balkhī); Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie*, 156, 178. Pilgrimage was also practiced by Balāsāghūn Muslims: see Nastits, "Burana," 225.

[90] Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, 3:431–2; Samʿānī, *Taḥbīr*, 1:243, 403, 446, 533; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 50:254; Balkhī, *Faḍāʾil-i Balkh*, 370.

[91] Dodkhudoeva, *Epigraficheskie*, 155, 156, 192, 201, 204; S. Ahmed, "Mapping the World of a Scholar in Sixth/Twelfth Century Bukhara: Regional Tradition in Medieval Islamic Scholarship as Reflected in a Bibliography," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120 (2000), 24–43, esp. 40–3.

[92] Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, 2:93–4, 213, 259, 323, 3:628; T. W. Joynboll and Y. Linant de Bellefonds, "Ḳāḍī Khān," *EI2* 4 (1978), 377; W. Heffening, "al-Marghīnānī," *EI2* 6 (1991), 557–8.

inscriptions from Uzgand and Safid Bulana (near Awsh in Farghāna) attest that the towns had flourishing Islamic communities.[93]

Islam was also practiced freely in the more eastern parts of the empire (at least until the rise of Güchülüg). In the early thirteenth century there were many Muslim colleges (*madrasas*) and allegedly more than three thousand *imāms* (religious leaders) in Khotan,[94] and Sufis were active in Almaliq and gained its ruler's favor.[95] Epitaphs from Qara Khitai Balāsāghūn recorded the presence of many religious Muslim functionaries (*muftī* [juriconsult]; *faqīh* [legal scholar], *shaykh al-Islām*[96]) in the city, and the title *muftī al-mashriq wa'l-ṣīn* (the juriconsult of the east and China) in one of them suggests that Balāsāghūn perceived itself as a center for the eastern Muslim community.[97] Indeed, even Muslim dignitaries from Iran came to visit Qara Khitai Balāsāghūn.[98]

### *The preservation of Muslim authority*

For Islam, however, religious freedom means not only the freedom of worship, but also the right to exercise authority.[99] One of the main criteria for differentiating the abode of Islam from the abode of war was that the government would be in Muslim hands: Muslim rulers would have the power to enforce their rule, and the judges would be able to apply Muslim law.[100] While remaining overlords, the Qara Khitai enabled the Muslims in their subject kingdoms to enjoy far greater authority than other non-Muslim conquerors, whether contemporary and later. Unlike the Franks, the Qara Khitai had nothing against Islam, and their conquest began without any religious zeal. Unlike the Mongols, who shared their tolerant view, they had no universal political aspirations and did not need to contest Islam on these grounds.[101] Moreover, the Qara Khitai were aware of their numerical inferiority vis-à-vis their subjects and therefore implemented the principle which guided the Khitans in north China, namely that "ruling according to what is common in each region brings best results."[102]

That Muslims were free to exercise authority under the Qara Khitai is obvious first of all from the fact that most Muslim rulers who had held sway before the

[93] V. D. Goriacheva and V. V. Nastits, "Epigraficheskie pamiatniki Safid-Bulana XII–XIV vv.," *EV* 22 (1984), 61–72; Goriacheva, *Ansambli*, 93–103.
[94] Juwaynī, 1:49, 53, tr. Boyle, 66, 71.
[95] Juwaynī, 1:58, tr. Boyle, 76.
[96] *Shaykh al-Islām* was the designation of the most influential and prestigious scholar in a certain town, who performed certain educational functions in it (J. H. Krammers and R. W. Bulliet, "Shaykh al-Islām," *EI2* 9 [1997], 399–400).
[97] Nastits, "Burana," 225, 232–3; for the title *muftī al-mashriq wa'l-ṣīn* see p. 101.
[98] Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb al-ansāb wa'l-alqāb wa'l-a'qāb* (Qumm, 1989), 2:579; Sam'ānī. *Taḥbīr*, 2:210; Sam'ānī, *Kitāb*, 4:184.
[99] B. Lewis, "Legal and Historical Reflections on the Position of Muslim Populations under Non-Muslim rule," *Journal, Institute of Muslim Minorities Affairs* 13 (1992), 10.
[100] Haykal, *al-Jihād wa'l-qitāl*, 1:669; Khadduri, *War and Peace*, 155; K. Abou El Fadl, "Islamic Law and Muslim Minorities: The Juristic Discourse on Muslim Minorities from the Second/Eighth to the Eleventh/Seventeenth Centuries," *Islamic Law and Society* 1 (1994), 161.
[101] For a broader discussion, see Biran, "Like a Mighty Wall," 74–7.
[102] *LS*, 45/685; p. 114.



arrival of the Qara Khitai were retained under their overall authority. While the rulers were subject to financial and military obligations (about which see ch. 4), they usually maintained their titles and their armies. No permanent Qara Khitai army was stationed in the conquered states, and they made it a matter of policy to send Muslim representatives to Muslim subject towns,[103] which certainly eased religious tensions. Since the Qara Khitai customarily did not use the Muslim symbols of submission, *khuṭba* and *sikka*,[104] there were hardly any external signs of the rulers' submission to the Qara Khitai. Looking at the titles that the Qarakhanid rulers bore under the Qara Khitai, one could hardly guess they were not independent rulers. Sultan 'Uthmān (r. 1200–13), the last of the Western Qarakhanids, who paid tribute to the Gürkhan and begged in vain to marry the latter's daughter, was called *sulṭān al-salāṭīn* (the Sultan of the Sultans) on his coins.[105] In an inscription of 1152 on the Uzgand mausoleum, the local Qarakhanid ruler is denoted as the greatest and just Khaqan (*al-Khāqān al-'ādil al-a'ẓam*).[106] Al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, who in 1160 dedicated his *Sindbād nāmah* to the Western Qarakhanid ruler Mas'ūd son of Ḥasan, goes to extremes in praising his patron, defining him as "the greatest and just Khaqan," "the most noble Sultan," "the crown of the kings of the Turks," "the helper of Islam and of the Muslims" and "God's shadow upon earth."[107]

The only authority besides that of the Qarakhanids themselves mentioned in the last two sources is that of the 'Abbāsid Caliph: The Uzgandi inscription of 1152 defines the Qarakhanid ruler Ḥusayn son of Ḥasan son of 'Alī as *mujtabā khalīfat Allāh, nāṣir amīr al-mu'minīn* ("he who was chosen by God's Caliph, assistant of the Commander of the Faithful").[108] In the dedication of the *Sindbād-nāmah* the Qarakhanid ruler is mentioned as *burhān khalīfat Allāh, nāṣir amīr al-mu'minīn a'azza Allāh anṣārahu wa-ḍā'afa iqtidārahu* ("the proof of God's Caliph, the helper of the Commander of the Faithful, may God strengthen his helpers and double his power").[109] In the same way, in the dedication of *Ta'rīkh-i Bukhārā* to the Bukharan *ṣadr* 'Abd al-'Azīz son of Burhān al-Dīn in 1178, the *ṣadr*, who worked in close cooperation with the Gürkhan, is called *ẓahr al-khilāfa* ("the backbone of the caliphate").[110] Those references to the caliphate, though probably having no practical meaning, imply that the sense of being under Islamic sovereignty, of belonging to the *dār al-Islām*, was retained in Transoxania and Farghāna even under the Qara Khitai. It is impossible to know whether the Qara Khitai were simply unaware of such cases or consciously chose to ignore them.

Another manifestation of the strength of Islam under the Qara Khitai was the undamaged authority of the Muslim scholars, the *'ulamā'*. Jūzjānī praised the Qara Khitai respect for those scholars,[111] and Yelü Chucai, visiting Transoxania in the

[103] Iṣfahānī, *Ta'rīkh*, 255; Bundārī, *Zubdat al-nuṣra*, 278; and see pp. 126–7 for further examples.
[104] See p. 126 for those terms, as well as for the rare examples of the Gürkhan's name on Qarakhanid coins.
[105] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 32; 'Uthmān had to give up this title when he transferred his loyalty to the Khwārazm Shāh.
[106] Iakubovskij, "Dve nadpisi," 29.
[107] Al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād nāmah*, 8, 431.
[108] Iakubovskij, "Dve nadpisi," 29.
[109] Al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād nāmah*, 8, 431.
[110] Narshakhī, *Ta'rīkh*, 3; Narshakhī, *History*, 4.
[111] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:95.

early 1220s, implied that the custom of the Western Regions was to exempt from taxation religious scholars of all faiths. This was indeed the norm in Inner Asian empires, although he said nothing specifically about the Qara Khitai.[112] The only reference to Qara Khitai esteem for religious learning (and authority) appears in *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, which also suggests that lesser scholars were not always respected. After the conquest of Balkh, one of the infidels' leaders[113] at Tirmidh summoned a group of Balkh notables including many religious functionaries (shaykhs, judges, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad [*sayyids*]) together with the city's *shaykh al-Islām*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad son of Aḥmad al-Balkhī. Whereas the other notables were brought to Tirmidh in chains and torn clothing (although they came back safe and sound to Balkh), the *shaykh al-Islām* was treated with all due respect. The Tirmidhi infidel explained to him that he was given this special treatment because "under the blue heaven" there was nobody greater than he.[114]

Despite the occasional humiliation of Muslim notables, the evidence reviewed in the previous section reveals that the religious activity of Muslim scholars was not harmed. It is also clear that at least in Transoxania religious offices (*muftī*, chief preacher, judge, *shaykh al-Islām*), continued to be manned.[115] The *'ulamā'* also retained their political authority and social prestige. This is especially evident from the fate of the Burhān family from Bukhara. After giving them extended authority as described in the letter cited above, the Gürkhan made them his sole representatives in Bukhara, where they were responsible for collecting its taxes. 'Awfī says that the power in the hands of the *ṣadr* 'Umar son of Mas'ūd (nominated in 1196/7) was as vast as the sea.[116] The great respect the Burhānids earned from other Muslims was obvious by the way the Burhānid *ṣadr* was received in Baghdad in 1206, when he led the pilgrims of Khurāsān; and it was due not only to his scholarship, but also to his political and economic power.[117]

While the high status of the Burhānids was exceptional, other *'ulamā'* also maintained political authority under the Qara Khitai. For example, the *'ulamā'* retained the function of mediators between contesting rulers. When the reinforcements sent by the Qara Khitai to aid the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand in 1158 decided not

[112] YLCC-*XYL*, 121/8b, 28; Roux, "Tolerance," 159–60. If indeed this was the case under the Qara Khitai, Muslims were treated the same as Christians, Jews or Buddhists, i.e., they could not have practiced discrimination against the *dhimmīs*, a situation which could have offended their feelings. However, I find no reference that documents such a situation.

[113] He is defined only as an infidel, and not specifically as Qara Khitai, yet since the shaykh described below died in 584/1188–9, the episode is probably related to the Qara Khitai conquest of Balkh in 1165.

[114] Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 372.

[115] Sam'ānī, *Kitāb*, 2:429, 483, 3:198–9; Sam'ānī, *Taḥbīr*, 2:225–6, 235–6, 261–2; Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, 2:314.

[116] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 146.

[117] Sibṭ al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2, 529; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 57; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:257; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Jāmi'*, 202; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68. Another manifestation of the political standing of the Burhānids is that when the Khwārazm Shāh conquered Transoxania in 1209–10 he treated the *ṣadr*s just like other local rulers, i.e., exiled them to Khwārazm (Nasawī, *Sīra*, 68, 94). For the continued appreciation of Burhānid scholarship see, e.g., al-Tamīmī al-Dārī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-sunniyya fī tarājim al-ḥanafiyya* (Cairo, 1970), 439; Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, 2:259; Sam'ānī, *Kitāb*, 3:198–9; Goriacheva and Nastits, "Safid-Bulana," 66.



to attack the Khwārazm Shāh's forces, a truce between the Western Qarakhanids and Khwārazm was negotiated by *imām*s and *'ulamā'*.[118] *'Ulamā'* were also able to challenge the local rulers. This was often the case in the relationship between the Western Qarakhanids and the Burhānid *ṣadr*s.[119] Even more revealing is the case of the *naqīb*, the head of the *sayyid*s, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, a post that existed in most Central Asian towns under the Qara Khitai.[120] While the Western Qarakhanid Khan Maḥmūd son of Muḥammad (1135/6–41) appointed one *naqīb* as his vizier,[121] more than once the Qarakhanids chose to execute a *naqīb*.[122] In 1217 the Khwārazm Shāh, aspiring to neutralize potential opposition to his rule in Samarqand, exiled the city's *shaykh al-Islām* and his family.[123] While *'ulamā'* challenging the state authority was certainly not a new phenomenon either in Islam in general or in the region in question,[124] the respect in which the scholars were held by the Qara Khitai increased their prestige on the political front as well.[125] Interestingly, there is no mention of criticism of scholars who enjoyed the "infidels'" favors.

Monumental building was another way in which Islam was able to display its authority.[126] Unlike other conquerors at the time, the Qara Khitai seem never to have damaged Muslim sanctuaries.[127] They certainly left the imposing minarets of Bukhara, Uzgand and Balāsāghūn intact, and did not object to religious building activity in their realm, including the erection of enormous monuments such as the minaret of Vabkent in the Bukhara oasis. Initiated by the Burhānid *ṣadr* in 1196/7 and completed in 1198/9, the still-existing minaret is almost 39 meters high with a base diameter of 6.2 meters and is beautifully designed.[128] Under the Qara Khitai the Burhānid *ṣadr*s also built mosques in Bukhara;[129] the Friday mosque (*jāmi'*)

[118] Juwaynī, 2:15, tr. Boyle, 289. A similar function of the *'ulamā'* is attested in Khwārazm and Ghūr in the same period. See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, 11:384; Juwaynī, 2:49, tr. Boyle, 317.

[119] 'Awfī, *Lubāb*, 146–9; Kochnev, "Sadrov," *passim*.

[120] Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, 2:618 (Samarqand), 621 (Khujand, Farghāna), 624 (Transoxania, Balāsāghūn, Ilāq), 627–9 (Marghīnān, Khujand, Akhsīkat, Uzgand).

[121] Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, 2:574.

[122] Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, 2:623–4. Such incidents, however, also happened before the reign of the Qara Khitai (Ibn Funduq, *Lubāb*, 2:620–1).

[123] Nasawī, *Sīra*, 70; the importance of the Transoxanian *'ulamā'* in local politics was further intensified under the rule of the Khwārazm Shāh, who exterminated the Qarakhanid dynasty: see, e.g., Juwaynī, 1:93, tr. Boyle, 120; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *Fākiha*, 242; J. Paul, "L'invasion mongole comme 'revelateur' de la société iranienne," in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), 52.

[124] E.g., Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 136.

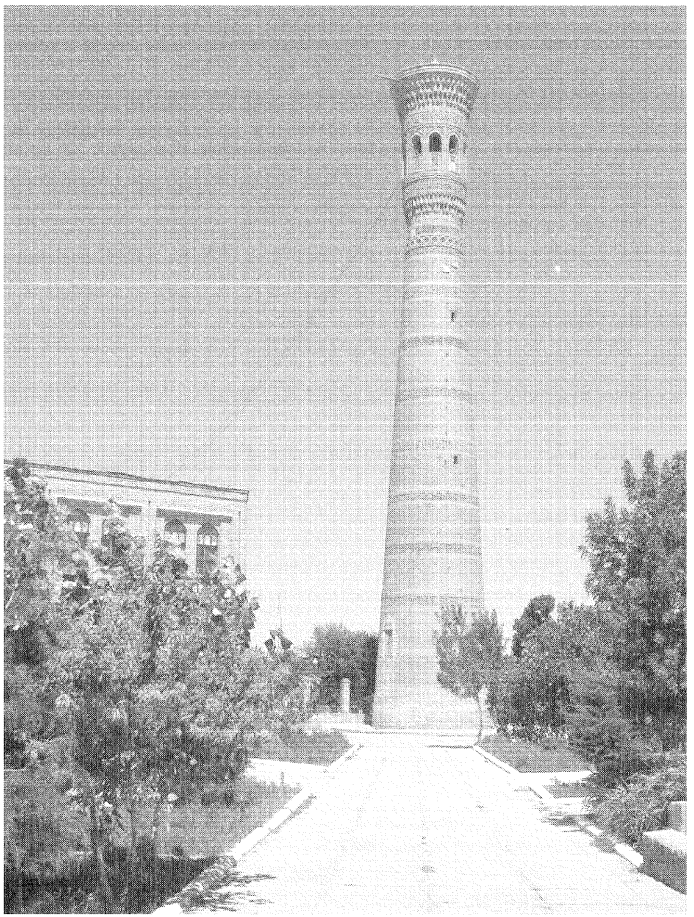
[125] Balkhī, *Faḍā'il-i Balkh*, 372; Rāwandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, 18.

[126] Lewis, "Reflections," 10.

[127] Cf. al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, "A'rāḍ," fol. 214a and Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ, *Nāmahlā*, 19 on the Oghuz invasion of Khurāsān in 1153 in which they destroyed mosques, pulpits, *madrasa*s and Islamic sanctuaries as well as harming Muslim dignitaries; Juwaynī, 1:80–1, tr. Boyle, 103–4 for Chinggis Khan turning Bukhara's *jāmi'* into a stable; B. Z. Kedar, "The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant," in J. M. Powell (ed.), *Muslims under Latin Rule* (Princeton, 1990), 161–2, for the Crusaders turning mosques into churches.

[128] L. I. Man'kovskaia and T. Pulatov, *Bukhara: Muzej pod otkrytym nebom* (Tashkent, 1991), 83; B. O'Kane, "The Minaret of Vābkent," in R. Hillenbrand (ed.), *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia* (Costa Mesa, 1994), 46–58; S. Khmel'nitskij, *Mezhdu Samanidami i Mongolami: Arkhitektura Srednej Azii XI–nachala XIII vv.* (Berlin and Riga, 1996), 1:128–51, esp. 138–42.

[129] Mu'īn al-Fuqarā', *Ta'rīkh-i Mullāzādah* (*Mazārāt-i Bukhārā*) (Tehran, 1960), 46.



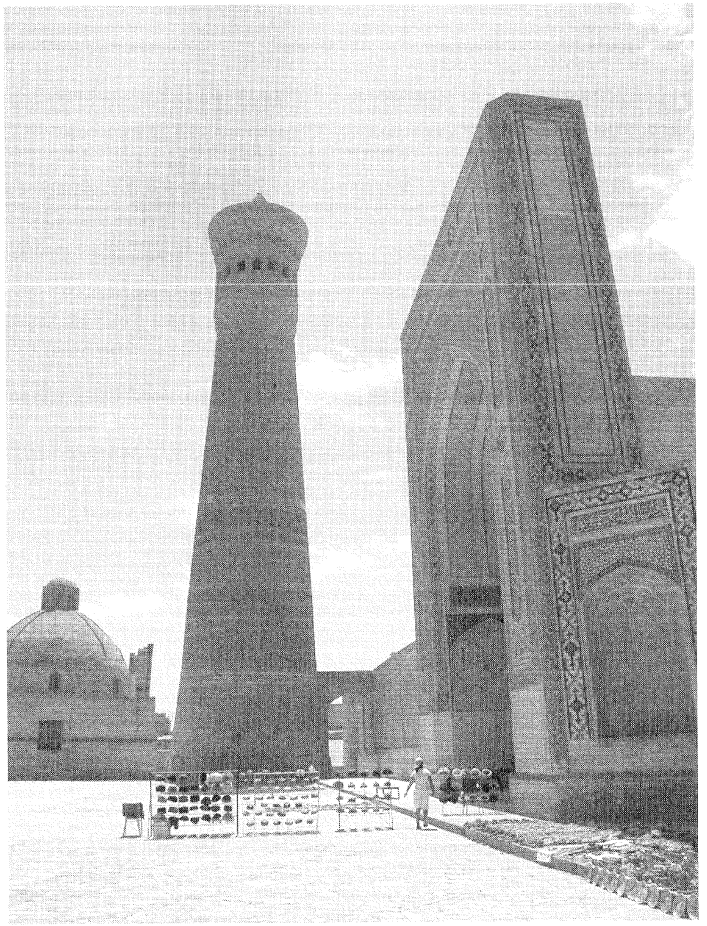
2. The minaret of Vabkent, built under the Qara Khitai (photograph: Joseph Patrich)

in Samarqand was restored;[130] and lofty mausoleums for the Qarakhanid rulers in Samarqand and Uzgand were built.[131]

[130] I. F. Buriakov and S. S. Tashkhodzhaev, "Istoricheskaia topografiia Samarkanda XI–nachala XIII vv.," *Afrasiab* 4 (1975), 12; I. F. Buriakov et al., "Sobornaia mechet' Samarkanda v. XI–nachala XIII vv.," *Afrasiab* 4 (1975), 98.

[131] Goriacheva, *Ansambli*, 88 ff.; G. A. Pugachenkova and E. V. Rtveladze, "Afrāsiyāb," *EIr* 1 (1985), 577–8; V. V. Nastits and B. D. Kochnev, "K atributsii iuzhnovo yzgenskogo mavsoleia (epigraficheskie i numismaticheckie dannye)," *Vostochnoe istoricheskoe istochnikovedenie i cpetsial'nye istoricheskie distsipliny* 4 (1995), 177–98.

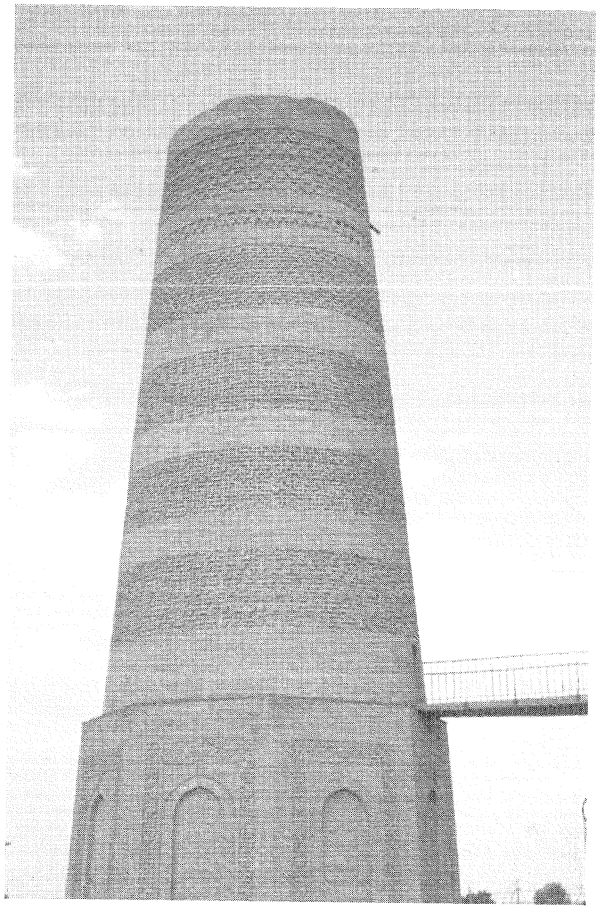




3. The Kalan minaret in Bukhara (photograph: Joseph Patrich)

The most striking illustration of the freedom and authority given to Islam under the Qara Khitai is that contemporary visitors and travelers completely ignored Qara Khitai rule. Benjamin of Tudela and Abū Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī, both twelfth-century travelers who visited Transoxania or at least Iran, do not mention the Qara Khitai at all.[132] Even more revealing is al-Samʿānī's evidence. Al-Samʿānī

[132] WF, 667 for Benjamin; al-Gharnāṭī, *Tuḥfa*, 86–91, 145–7, 202.

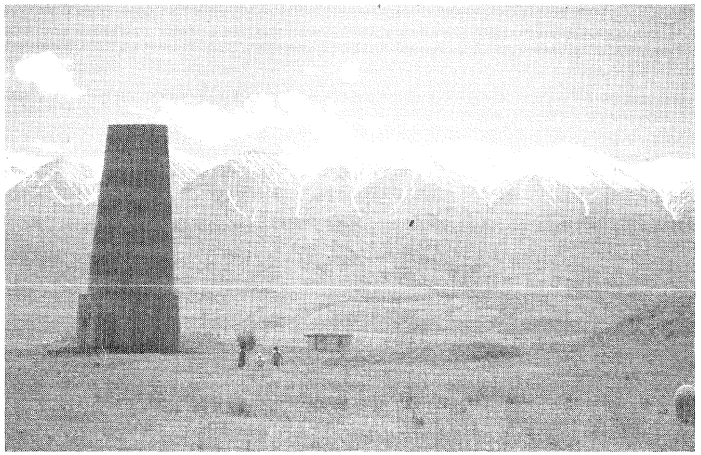


4. The Burana minaret near Balāsāghūn (photograph: Yuri Pines)

stayed in Transoxania in 1153/4–6/7, a period for which there is rare hard proof – coins – for the region's submission to the Qara Khitai.[133] Yet in his description of the cities subject to the Qara Khitai (e.g., Bukhara, Balāsāghūn, Talas, Kashgar, Khotan), al-Samʿānī never mentions that they were under non-Muslim rule, but

[133] Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 31.





5. The Burana minaret against the background of the Tian Shan mountains (photograph: Yuri Pines)

only enumerates the Muslim scholars who originated there.[134] By contrast, when writing not only about Jerusalem but also about Antioch, Nāblus or Banyas, he stresses that they were under the infidel Franks at the time.[135]

The laments for the Muslim territories held by the Franks, as well as al-Samʿānī's evidence that the grave of the Transoxanian Shaykh Aḥmad al-Surmārī (d. 242/856–7), who was famed for killing infidels, was a site of pilgrimage in the mid-twelfth century,[136] show that the notion of *jihād* had not disappeared from twelfth-century Transoxaniana. Yet until the last years of the Qara Khitai it was not directed against them.

The examples adduced so far refer mostly to Transoxania and Farghāna, about which information is relatively ample. However, the situation may have been very different in other regions of the Qara Khitai empire. In Khwārazm, for example, the tribute embassies of the Qara Khitai, whose annual visits included a display of the Khwārazm Shāh's submission to them, harmed the latter's prestige more seriously, especially when Muḥammad aspired to lead the Muslim world.[137] The most problematic region must have been the central territory of the Qara Khitai. There the Muslim ruler of Balāsāghūn was degraded and relocated following the Qara Khitai conquest,[138] and their presence was stronger than in Transoxania or Khwārazm.

[134] See, e.g., Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 1:293 (Bukhara), 424 (Balāsāghūn); 2:324–5 (Khotan); 4:55–6 (Ṭarāz); 5:17–18 (Kashgar). Even when mentioning Qatwān, al-Samʿānī only said that there was a great battle of the Muslims there and did not mention against whom (*Kitāb*, 4:525).
[135] Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 1:220, 273; 5:363 ff. [136] Samʿānī, *Kitāb*, 3:247–8.
[137] See p. 123. [138] See pp. 39–40 and 116–17.

There is not much evidence about the situation in the central territory, yet it is clear that even in the Qara Khitai central administration talented Muslims could reach high, authoritative posts. The vizier of the last Gürkhan, for example, was a Muslim merchant called Maḥmūd Tai;[139] and the Gürkhan's court doctor was the Muslim judge (*qāḍī*) Shams al-Dīn Manṣūr son of Maḥmūd al-Uzgandī.[140] Here, too, the doctor's willingness to serve the infidels is not negatively recalled but is taken as proof of his political wisdom.[141] Unlike the Qarakhanids, who ruined and profaned the sanctuaries of other religions (Turkic and Buddhist in their case), the Qara Khitai left the imposing minaret of Balāsāghūn intact, thereby preserving this symbol of Islamic authority.[142]

### *Justice as legitimization*

The broad religious tolerance and political autonomy that the Qara Khitai gave their subjects, combined with a relatively benign conquest and originally reasonable financial demands, all gave the Qara Khitai a firm reputation as just rulers.[143] This was not only helpful in attracting their subjects' support, but also had religious meaning, since it could have legitimized Qara Khitai rule even if they did not embrace Islam. In medieval Muslim political theory, justice was the foundation of righteous government,[144] and the emphasis on justice in the titles and panegyrics of the Western Qarakhanids under the Qara Khitai certainly demonstrates its central position in legitimizing the ruler.[145] One of the literary means to stress the importance of justice for the Muslim government was the maxim "Kingship remains with the unbelievers but not with injustice," known also in a variant, "A just infidel is preferable to an unjust Muslim ruler," which from the eleventh century onward was often quoted in Muslim *adab* works and even attributed to the Prophet.[146] Originally, the maxim did not have legal or political meaning, yet it acquired one when non-Muslim rulers proliferated. This is clear, for example, from Hülegü Khan's use of this maxim to legitimize his rule in Baghdad after he extinguished the ʿAbbāsid caliphate in 1258.[147] The maxim was most probably

[139] Juwaynī, 2:89, tr. Boyle, 357. [140] ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 165–6. [141] *Ibid.*

[142] For the Balāsāghūn (Burana) minaret see, e.g., Goriacheva, *Ansambli*, 29 ff.; Khmel'nitskij, *Mezhdu*, 1:131–3.

[143] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:96; Juwaynī, 2:90, tr. Boyle, 358; Niẓāmī, *Chahār maqāla*, 22, tr. 24; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, 62:330.

[144] A. K. S. Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 92, 119.

[145] ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 147–9; al-Kātib al-Samarqandī, *Sindbād nāmah*, 8; Iakubovskij, "Dve nadpisi," 29. For the importance of justice in the Eastern Qarakhanid realm in the pre-Qara Khitai period, see Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Wisdom*, 64–9.

[146] Lewis, "Reflections," 4; Lambton, "Justice," 104; J. Sadan, "Community and Extra-Community as a Legal and Literary Problem," *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980), 102–15. The most common Arabic form is *al-mulk yubqā maʿa al-kufr wa-lā yubqā maʿa al-ẓulm*.

[147] Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *al-Fakhrī fī ādāb al-sulṭāniyya waʾl-duwal al-islāmiyya* (Paris, 1895), 21; cited in Sadan, "Community," 114–15.



known in the Qara Khitai realm,[148] and was much more applicable to them than to Hülegü, so it is quite possible that it was used to justify their rule as well,[149] if the need ever arose (e.g., in the central territory).

But leaving legal discussions aside, as long as the Qara Khitai fulfilled the ruler's basic functions – maintaining order and preventing oppression – and as long as they did not interfere with their subjects' religious practices, they enjoyed the support of their subject Muslims (and non-Muslims). Indeed, the Muslims sometimes preferred to side with the Qara Khitai against a harsher Muslim ruler. The Khwārazm Shāh, who in 1182 raided Bukhara, complained that its allegedly apostatized population preferred "the net of unbelief" to his pious forces.[150] Signs of religious dissatisfaction in Transoxania appeared only in the last years of the Qara Khitai, and only after their local commissioners, taking advantage of the Gürkhan's declining power, greatly increased their financial demands and adopted a haughty attitude.[151] The same is true of the reaction in Balāsāghūn: The only sign of opposition to the Qara Khitai was in 1211, when the city dwellers, expecting the arrival of the Khwārazm Shāh, closed the city gates before the returning Qara Khitai army.[152]

The Qara Khitai's policies created a situation in which at least Transoxania, the region that bordered on the Muslim world, considered itself as part of *dār al-Islām* despite its infidel overlords. Moreover, the Qara Khitai did not pose a direct threat to other Muslim lands west of the Oxus. Their occasional activity in Khurāsān was always initiated by their Muslim vassals and, except in the case of Balkh (which they held from 1165 till 1198), never ended in the subjugation of new territories. Under those circumstances, it was not easy to raise *jihād* against the Qara Khitai.

## The laxity of the *jihād* spirit: the political situation in the eastern Islamic world

Apart from the Qara Khitai policies, the second reason that they largely escaped *jihād* was the fragmented political situation in the eastern Islamic world and the low degree of solidarity among Muslims inside and outside the Qara Khitai realm.

[148] It appears, for example, in the *Tadhkira* of Ibn Khamdūn (d. 1169), who wrote in Khwārazm, as well as in other twelfth- to thirteenth-century compositions; Sadan, "Community," 109.

[149] This suggestion, however, is purely theoretical. In the few legal works originating in the Qara Khitai empire I was able to check (*al-Hidāya*; *Fatāwā Qāḍī Khān*; *al-Dhakhīra al-Burhāniya*), I found no reference to the Qara Khitai rule at all. This, however, characterizes the twelfth century's legal literature even in places where conquerors ruled more sternly, e.g., under the Franks (E. Sivan, *L'Islam et le Croisade* [Paris, 1968], 191–2). Abou El Fadl, who studied the problem of Muslims under non-Muslim rule, explained that the extent of this problem became significant only from the twelfth century onward, and it took several centuries before the law schools fully developed and systematized their responses. The most extensive discussion of this issue in the twelfth century took place in Spain after the *reconquista*, mainly in the Mālikī school (Abou El Fadl, "Muslim Minorities," 150–7).

[150] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:137–8; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 346–7; Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 125–7.

[151] Juwaynī, 2:74, 75, 90, 123, tr. Boyle, 341, 342, 358, 393–4; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:259.

[152] Juwaynī, 2:92, tr. Boyle, 360.

*Jihād* terminology is not completely absent from the records of the wars against the Qara Khitai. It is particularly stressed in the official inter-Muslim correspondence of Tekish Khwārazm Shāh (r. 1172–1200).[153] Yet, bearing in mind that this ruler owed his crown to the Qara Khitai, was accused around 1196 of aspiring to send the Caliph's head to the Qara Khitai, asked for (and received) Qara Khitai military help against the Muslim Ghūrids in 1198, and ended his reign as an obedient Qara Khitai vassal,[154] his enthusiastic words should be taken with a generous grain of salt.

Rhetoric notwithstanding, competition between the different Islamic forces was the main obstacle to the creation of a full-scale Muslim coalition against the Qara Khitai. During the reign of the Qara Khitai, the 'Abbāsid caliphate, especially when revived under the Caliph Nāṣir (r. 1180–1225), the declining Saljūqs and the rising Khwārazm Shāhs were rivals for the leadership of the eastern Islamic world.[155] The powerful Qara Khitai were more valuable as allies in this competition than as a unifying factor. Not only did no united Muslim front coalesce, but competition also discouraged each of the potential participants from challenging the Qara Khitai alone. After Sanjar's death in 1157, his successor, the Saljūq Sultan Mas'ūd, suggested to the Khwārazm Shāh II Arslan that they should cooperate against the Qara Khitai. Despite II Arslan's enthusiastic acceptance of the offer, the alliance never materialized. The failure to join forces was mainly due to Mas'ūd's strained relations with the Caliph, as a result of which he refrained from moving most of his troops eastward, and because II Arslan refused to accept Mas'ūd as his lord.[156] After Tekish Khwārazm Shāh defeated the Iraqi forces in 1194, the 'Abbāsid Caliph addressed the Qara Khitai, calling upon them to attack Tekish, a request they had no reason to comply with at the time. Around the same time, the Caliph also tried in vain to incite the Ghūrids to cooperate with the Qara Khitai against Khwārazm.[157] After the great Ghūrid defeat at Andkhūd, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ghūrī waged *jihād* against the Qara Khitai, but his efforts were cut short when he was slain by an Ismā'īli assassin,[158] one more demonstration of internecine Muslim conflicts.

The relations of the Khwārazm Shāhs with the Qara Khitai were more complicated. Forced into Qara Khitai vassalage in 1142, the Khwārazmians tried several times to defy their overlords, while also enlisting them both to help solve intra-Khwārazmian disputes (e.g., the struggle between Tekish and Sulṭān Shāh) and to overcome their Muslim rivals, the Saljūqs and the Ghūrids.[159] Muḥammad was long aware of the apparent contradiction between his desire to lead the Islamic world and his status as the infidels' vassal. However, only after he eliminated the

[153] Baghdādī, *Tawassul*, 125–7, 159, 174.
[154] Juwaynī, 2:17–18, 89, tr. Boyle, 290, 357; Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:301, 302; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:335; Abū Ghāzī, *Histoire*, 50; Ibn al-Athīr, 11:377, 12:135–6.
[155] For a general description of this period see Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History."
[156] *Inshā'*, 30–3; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 332.
[157] Juwaynī, 2:120, tr. Boyle, 390.
[158] Ibn al-Athīr,12:213. According to another version, also given by Ibn al-Athīr, he was killed by an infidel Khokar. Cf. Juwaynī, 2:59, tr. Boyle, 325; Jūzjānī/Ḥabibī, 1:403.
[159] For Khwārazmian history in the Qara Khitai period see Bosworth, "Political and Dynastic History," 185–94; Bunniatov, *Khorezmshakhov*, 32–80; chs. 1, 3 above.



Ghūrids, and after the increasing demands and haughty attitude of the Qara Khitai both enraged him and alienated some of the other Qara Khitai vassals from their lords, did the Khwārazm Shāh dare to come out against the Qara Khitai.[160] The circumstances of the Khwārazm Shāh's entrance into Bukhara exemplify the cynical use of *jihād* terminology. He actually entered Bukhara to help the Burhānids, the Gürkhan's officials, against the city folk who had deposed them due to their oppressive behavior, which the weakened Gürkhan could not have stopped. Nor could it have been prevented by the common religion of the officials and the population.[161]

Another expression of the non-zealous atmosphere and the priority of pragmatic considerations over religious ones is the low degree of Muslim solidarity both inside and outside the Qara Khitai empire. This stemmed partly from the historic particularism of the urban (oasis) communities throughout Central Asia, regardless of their religious affiliation, yet it is still impressive. The most obvious expression of that was in the military field: the Qara Khitai used auxiliary troops, Muslims and others, in their wars, and therefore they sometimes sent one Muslim force against another, a tactic that rarely resulted in religious tension.[162] The Qara Khitai were aware of possible solidarity among their Muslim subjects (and neighbors) and even tried to manipulate it, yet the examples reviewed below are exceptions rather than the rule.

In the early thirteenth century, when the Muslim Sultan of Khotan rebelled against the Qara Khitai, the Gürkhan asked another Muslim subject ruler, Arslan Khan of Qayaliq, to help him against the rebels. This request, however, was made with the actual intention of getting rid of Arslan Khan. If he joined the rebels, the Gürkhan would have a good excuse to eliminate him. On the other hand, "if he yielded obedience but treated the Muslims gently and showed no energy in the campaign against Khotan, on this pretext also he might withdraw his neck from the noose of life."[163] Arslan Khan, however, chose to take his own life so that his son could inherit his domain. Thus solidarity among the Gürkhan's Muslim subject rulers was not put to the test.

The sources retain only one notable example of Muslim solidarity both inside and outside the Qara Khitai empire. When the Qara Khitai defeated the Ghūrid ruler, Shihāb al-Dīn, in Andkhūd, Sultan 'Uthmān, the Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand, intervened and convinced Shihāb al-Dīn to surrender, apparently refusing to let a Muslim ruler be destroyed by the infidels. The different versions of 'Uthmān's actions do not allow us to decide whether his mediation was positively unfavorable to the Qara Khitai cause,[164] or actually served their interest.[165] In any case, before

[160] See the Muslim criticism of the Khwārazm Shāh, which started at least in 1196: Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:301; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:136–7, 231. Not surprisingly, the criticism began only after Khwārazmian power became a serious threat to their neighbors. It never stopped the Caliph, for example, from initiating cooperation with the Qara Khitai. See, e.g., Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 8/2: 634; Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 144; Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh*, 62:35; and pp. 86–7.
[161] See pp. 71–2.
[162] See pp. 149–51.
[163] Juwaynī, 1:56, tr. Boyle, 74.
[164] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Ibn Isfandiyār, *Ta'rīkh*, 170–1; Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 125b.
[165] As can be deduced from Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:403; Juwaynī, 2:57, tr. Boyle, 324; Rashīd/Khwārazm, fol. 163a; Mīrkhwānd, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:386; "Alfī," fol. 174a.

this mediation 'Uthmān, along with other Muslim princes, took part in the battle, fighting with the Qara Khitai against their coreligionists.[166] Even in the last days of the dynasty, when the Qara Khitai struggled for survival against the double threat of Güchülüg and Muḥammad, several Transoxanian rulers preferred to side with them instead of backing the Muslim Khwārazm Shāh.[167]

Did the political superiority of the Qara Khitai have any religious repercussions in the Muslim world? The only evidence for that is the short-lived apostasy of Dānyāl, the ruler of the Salt range in south India. After hearing how the Qara Khitai defeated the Ghūrids in Andkhūd in 1204, Dānyāl, a newly converted Muslim, apostatized and joined the non-Muslim Kokhars, who rebelled against the Ghūrids.[168] After Shihāb al-Dīn decisively rooted out the Kokhars, Dānyāl found his way back into the Ghūrid ranks, although he had to give up his commanding post.[169] There is no mention of his re-conversion, but it was probably part of the deal.

To sum up, since the Qara Khitai conquest did not originate in religious zeal, it was not perceived as a threat to Islam. The relations between the Qara Khitai and the Muslims were mostly pragmatic. Moreover, due to the Qara Khitai's loose notion of sovereignty, it was easier to ignore their presence altogether than to cope with the legal and religious implications of subjugation to infidels. In twelfth-century Central Asia there was no apparent threat to the peaceful existence of Islam and no Jerusalem to unite around and liberate. Thus the religious factor remained markedly inferior to political and economic considerations. As long as the Gürkhans were able to maintain order, prevent oppression and secure religious tolerance, they enjoyed the support of their subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Only when they were weakened and their local governors manipulated this weakness and oppressed the population did political, social and economic protest appear in religious guise, and the *jihādī* terminology come to the fore.

## Güchülüg's policy: an undercurrent of religious tension?

In contrast to the general religious tolerance of the Qara Khitai, Güchülüg's reign (1211–18) is famous mostly for its anti-Islamic policy. After his usurpation of the Qara Khitai throne, Güchülüg, a former Christian and a newly converted Buddhist, gave his subjects the rather curious choice of either adopting Christianity or Buddhism, or donning Khitan garb. Güchülüg also prohibited any public manifestation of the Islamic creed, his policy resulting in a situation in which "the *mu'adhdhins*' call to prayer and the worship of monotheist and believer were broken off; and the schools were closed and destroyed," to use Juwaynī's often-cited words.[170] After

[166] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:402; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 66; Ibn al-Athīr, 12:188; Juwaynī, 2:55, tr. Boyle, 323.
[167] Juwaynī, 2:80, 83, tr. Boyle, 348, 350; see pp. 72–3, 78.
[168] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:208; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:314. [169] Ibn al-Athīr, 12:211.
[170] Juwaynī, 1:49, 53, tr. Boyle, 65–6, 70; cf. Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338: in his version the choice is between Christianity and idolatry (i.e., Buddhism), which is defined as the garb, i.e., the custom, of the Khitans.



he conquered Khotan, Güchülüg convened a religious debate, involving at least Christians and Muslims. The Muslim *imām*, who won the debate according to our Muslim sources, was put to death when he refused to renounce his religion, and the oppression of the Muslims apparently continued more severely afterwards.[171]

Religious debates were common practice among Turkic and Mongol rulers,[172] and the option of adopting the rulers' style of clothes, the one chosen by most Muslims, was well known in the history of China and its Inner Asian neighbors.[173] Yet religious persecution and, especially, enforced conversion are much less frequent in Inner Asian religious history.[174] While there was religious tension between Buddhism and Islam in the Tarim basin before the rise of the Qara Khitai,[175] it seems rather strange that after nearly a hundred years of tolerant Buddhist rule, the Muslims would provoke such antagonism in Güchülüg. I suspect that the description of his policies is vastly exaggerated. After all, both Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, the only sources that described Güchülüg's policy, were clearly biased in favor of the Mongols, in whose service they had worked.[176] Güchülüg's policy gave those Muslim historians a rare opportunity to portray the Mongols (who later captured Güchülüg) as liberators of the Muslims. In their description of Jebe's campaign against Güchülüg, Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn stress that upon entering Kashgar, the Mongols commander proclaimed that each person could adhere to his forefathers' religion. This statement gained him the population's support long before the Mongols seized Güchülüg.[177] According to the Chinese version of those events, however, Kashgar, Khotan and Yarkand surrendered only after the Mongols displayed Güchülüg's head in those cities.[178] Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn's descriptions of Güchülüg's attempt to force the Muslims to abjure their faith should, therefore, be taken with a grain of salt.

Yet Güchülüg's "unjust" policies (such as pillaging or burning harvests) could easily have provoked opposition, which was likely to take the form of religious antagonism. More concretely, the order to adopt the infidels' clothing was sure to cause widespread resentment. Güchülüg's policy of billeting his non-Muslim troops on Kashgar's Muslim population[179] resulted in much closer contacts

[171] Juwaynī, 1:49, 53–55, tr. Boyle, 65–6, 70–73; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338.
[172] Roux, "Tolerance," 146–9; see Jackson and Morgan (eds.), *Rubruck*, 228 ff. for the famous debate under Möngke Khan.
[173] Juwaynī, 1:49, tr. Boyle, 65; see D. B. Honey, *Stripping off Felt and Fur: An Essay on Nomadic Sinicization* (Bloomington, 1992), *passim*; L. L. Viktorova, *Mongoly: Proiskhozhdenie naroda i istoki Kul'tury* (Moscow, 1980), 30–48; M. V. Vorob'ev, *Kul'tura Chzhurchenej i gosudarstva Tszin X v.–1234. Istoriceskii ocerk* (Moscow, 1983), 90–6.
[174] J. P. Roux, "Les religions dans les sociétés Turco-Mongoles," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 201 (1984), 412–16, 420 for later examples of religious persecution, nearly all of them originating from newly converted Muslims; officially, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam do not recognize enforced conversion as legal (Bentley, *Old World*, 12).
[175] Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 1:270 (section 173), and see pp. 174, 178 above.
[176] For Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn's bias (though in a different context) see P. Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *CAJ* 22 (1978), 186–244. Rashīd al-Dīn is probably citing Juwaynī in this case.
[177] Juwaynī, 1:50, tr. Boyle, 67–8; Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:338. [178] *YS*, 120/2969.
[179] For Güchülüg's policies see pp. 81–2.

between Muslims and non-Muslims. Together, those policies were enough to create religious tension and an anti-Muslim image for Güchülüg even if he took no other measures against Islam. They could also justify his later image as another incarnation of Prester John.[180]

However, a few decades after the dissolution of the Qara Khitai empire, in the mid-thirteenth century, there is some evidence of friction between Muslims and Buddhists. The sharpest (but historically doubtful) example is Jūzjānī's description of the Buddhist priests' address to the Mongol Qa'an Güyüg (r. 1246–8), asking him either to kill all the Muslims under his rule or to emasculate the men. Güyüg allegedly implemented the mass emasculation – which, however, no other source has reported.[181] Rubruck mentions that in 1253 the Muslims in Qayaliq "shun them [the idolaters, i.e., Buddhists] to the point that they are unwilling even to talk about them. When I asked the Saracens about these people they were scandalized."[182] At the end of his description of Uighur Buddhism Juwaynī claims that: "There are none more bigoted than the idolaters of the East, and none more hostile to Islam."[183] Yet those tensions seem to originate in the closer contact between the two religions under the Mongol empire, which in the early thirteenth century included the large Buddhist population of the Tanguts and the northern Chinese.[184] Nothing in the low profile of Buddhism under the Qara Khitai, as displayed above, suggests that religious tension was a main issue then.

## The non-Islamization of the Qara Khitai

I would like to suggest that the fact that, unlike either their predecessors or successors, the Qara Khitai did not embrace Islam was closely connected to their adherence to the Chinese–Liao tradition, and to a lesser extent to the political situation of the Islamic world described above. In order to explain this, one should understand the reasons behind other nomadic conversions in Central Asia. A medieval Muslim view on this subject, which is also related to the eastern Islamic world's relations with the fringes of China on the eve of the Qara Khitai's accession, illustrates two important reasons:

*The Book of Treasures and Luxury Articles* (*Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuḥaf*) by Ibn Zubayr, written around 1070 in Egypt, includes a report about an alleged embassy from the emperor[185] of China to the Sāmānid *amīr* Naṣr son of Aḥmad, which arrived in Bukhara in 939. Encouraged by an Iranian turncoat who became his vizier, the "emperor of China" sent a mission of four senior scholars and forty cavalrymen, demanding that Naṣr publicly acknowledge Chinese suzerainty and pay tribute for twenty-seven years. He threatened that, if he refused, both Naṣr and his overlord, the 'Abbāsid Caliph, would be attacked. Learning about the embassy and its mission from the governor of his easternmost province of Farghāna, Naṣr ordered him to treat the mission hospitably, and began to make preparations. He ordered his governors to gather their troops, volunteers and military slaves, in Bukhara. There he summoned goldsmiths to make him a new crown as well as gold and silver scepters, and ordered the houses of Bukhara to be decked out in various colors. Gilded weapons and armor were collected throughout the country, and the *amīr*'s treasury supplied volunteers with mounts, weapons and banners. When the ambassadors arrived, the city of Bukhara was adorned from one end to the other with brocade, silk and precious fabrics. The ambassadors paraded along a road lined with ranks of cavalry and infantry with gilded cuirasses and helmets. Entering the city, they viewed lines of generals, each leading a thousand military slaves wearing satin brocade robes and caps of sable furs, the first ten of each group holding gold swords and belts and gilded maces. Then they passed between two lines of shaykhs wearing black robes with silver belts. Upon entering the *amīr*'s court, they found him sitting on his ceremonial throne, wearing a quilted coverlet of pheasant plumes embroidered with gold thread, adorned with jewels, wearing his new crown, and surrounded by tamed beasts. After this overawing reception, the emissaries were led to an official residence for ambassadors. Only forty days later did the *amīr* give them an audience, proudly refuting their demands. He then sent them back to their ruler, but not before stressing that with all his might and wealth he was only one of the Caliph's servants. The narrator's final comment on this story is that "all this was the reason why the emperor of China became a Muslim."[186]

As is well known, the emperor of China did not become a Muslim, nor, probably, was he involved in this mission. Yet what is important for our purposes is not the historicity of this anecdote,[187] but the motives for Islamization mentioned in the episode and their relevance for the Qara Khitai.

The first motive apparent in this story is the show of extraordinary military and political power. Yet the Qara Khitai won their fame in the Muslim world and beyond it in 1141 by crushing the till-then-undefeatable Sultan Sanjar, by far the most powerful Muslim leader of his time.[188] Throughout most of their reign the Qara

[180] Gumilev, *Searches*, 162–8; D. Morgan, "Prester John and the Mongols," in Beckingham and Hamilton (eds.), *Prester John*, 161–6.

[181] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:171–3; Grupper, "Monarchy," 56–9.

[182] Jackson and Morgan (eds.), *Rubruck*, 151.

[183] Juwaynī, 1:44, tr. Boyle, 60.

[184] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:171–3; Juwaynī, 3:60, tr. Boyle, 589; cf. *ZK*, 156–7; Folz, "Ecumenical Mischief," 42.

[185] The text has *malik al-Ṣīn*, i.e., the king of China, which usually refers to a subordinate ruler and not to the emperor himself (A. Ayalon, "Malik," *EI2* 6 (1991), 261). Yet Ibn Zubayr uses the term *malik al-Ṣīn* as referring to the Chinese emperor (e.g., *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir wa'l-tuḥaf* [Kuwait, 1959], 3, 9), although the "emperor" he mentioned is probably a Central Asian king, and see below.

[186] Ibn Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā'ir*, 139–50; C. E. Bosworth, "An Alleged Embassy from the Emperor of China to the Amīr Naṣr b. Aḥmad: A Contribution to Sāmānid Military History," in M. Minovi and I. Afshar (eds.) *Yād-nāme-ye Irān-ye Minorsky* (Tehran, 1969), 1–7.

[187] The conversion mentioned above might allude to the Qarakhanids' conversion in the later decades of the tenth century, while the embassy is probably identical to that of "the King of China Qalīn b. Shākir" to the same Sāmānid *amīr*, recorded in other sources and identified as originating among the Yellow Uighurs. Bosworth, "Embassy," 8, and see Abu Dulaf's description of that Chinese embassy as cited in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 3:440 ff.

[188] See pp. 41 ff.

Khitai continued to enjoy military superiority over their Muslim neighbors, which minimized the attraction of Islamization. Furthermore, if the Qara Khitai had had to choose between China and the Muslim world for the shaping of their identity, the military power of the Jin (and the Song) must have been more impressive than the fragmented Muslim world of the mid-to-late twelfth century described above.[189]

The importance of military and political might is, however, apparent in the last years of the Qara Khitai. When the dynasty collapsed and the way to retain a leading position in Muslim Khwārazm or Kirmān passed through Islamization, several noble Khitans were quick to adopt the new faith; the most famous among them was Baraq Ḥājib, who subsequently founded the Muslim Qara Khitai dynasty of Kirmān, in south Persia (1222/3–1306).[190]

The second motive apparent in the episode is the desire to participate in the affluence of Islamic civilization that the Sāmānid *amīr* was so anxious to demonstrate. The lure of civilization was certainly attractive to the Inner Asian tribes.[191] Yet, being closely acquainted with the no less impressive civilization of China, the lure of Muslim wealth and splendor was of less significance for the Qara Khitai.

Beyond the motives apparent in this episode, anthropologists and historians have explained the conversion of Inner Asian nomads as closely related to the process of state formation. When advanced tribal unions were in the process of transforming themselves into a polity, a new religion could function as a unifying force, a means of ideological distancing, and a sign of independence, all of which aided the process of state formation.[192] In the case of conversions to Islam, DeWeese and Khazanov have stressed its role in giving the Islamized group a more cohesive communal identity, differentiating between us – Muslims – and them – infidels – that was often consolidated by means of war (*jihād*) against a common non-Muslim enemy.[193]

In the case of the Qara Khitai, those functions were fulfilled by their Chinese–Liao tradition. Though not entirely religious in its character, this tradition gave the Qara Khitai, i.e., the Western Liao, a separate and cohesive identity that won them prestige among their multi-ethnic and multi-religious subjects. Part of this identity was the still existing aspiration to restore the original Liao in its former domain. This notion clearly pulled the Qara Khitai eastward, away from the Muslim lands, and defined their common enemy, the Jurchen Jin dynasty, in ethnic rather than in religious terms. Moreover, the Liao imperial framework included means of

[189] For Jin military organization see, e.g., Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 263–7; Wang Cengyu, *Jin chao jun zhi* (Hebei, 1996), *passim*; H. Franke, "The Military System of the Chin Dynasty," in H. Franke, *Krieg und Krieger im chinesischen Mittelalter (12. bis 14. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart, 2003), 215–45.

[190] For the fall of the Qara Khitai see ch. 3. For Baraq Ḥājib and the Kirmānid dynasty see pp. 87–9; see also n. 206 below.

[191] Golden, "The Karakhanids," 353.

[192] P. B. Golden, "Religion among the Qipchaqs of Medieval Eurasia," *CAJ* 42 (1998), 237; A. M. Khazanov, "The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes," in M. Gervers and W. Schlepp (eds.), *Nomadic Diplomacy, Destruction and Religion from the Pacific to the Adriatic* (Toronto, 1994), 16.

[193] DeWeese, *Islamization*, 17–27; Khazanov, "World Religions," 25.



centralization, which facilitated the establishment of the Qara Khitai empire.[194] Islam, therefore, was not needed for those functions.

Another major motive which drove Inner Asian peoples to adopt Islam was their desire to win legitimacy among their Muslim subjects and neighbors and to legitimize their conquests.[195] But the Qara Khitai were able to gain legitimacy in the Muslim world without being Muslims themselves: the combination of their "just" policies, the prestige of China and their affinities to the Turkic rulers and the Turkic and Turkicized population enabled them to achieve that. They therefore did not need Islam for gaining legitimization.

So far the discussion has dealt only with mundane motives, not with spiritual ones, as indeed political, economic and social considerations stood behind most of the medieval Inner Asian conversions.[196] Yet one should bear in mind that the Qara Khitai came to Central Asia equipped with their own universal religion, Buddhism. Whatever Buddhism really meant for the Qara Khitai, their adherence to it suggests that their spiritual stimulation to adopt Islam was also rather weak.

Within their multi-religious empire in Central Asia, there were no political or social pressures that encouraged the Qara Khitai to Islamize. Nor was there any specific interest that induced them to associate themselves with Islam. Yet a certain amount of acculturation that might have subsequently led to conversion was natural, and can be detected in the sources.[197]

The Qara Khitai lived mostly in their central territory and outside the cities, so they were not much exposed to Muslim urban culture. Yet it is quite possible that some of the nomadic Turkic tribesmen who had joined the Qara Khitai in Central Asia had already accepted Islam. Moreover, the Qara Khitai came into contact with Muslims in their central and local administration and, in larger numbers, in their joint participation in military campaigns. Muslim merchants moving between Mongolia and Transoxania[198] must have gone through the central territory of the Qara Khitai, and since there were Muslim Sufis in Almaliq and Transoxania, they were most probably present in other parts of the Qara Khitai empire.[199] Although

[194] See p. 125. [195] Khazanov, "World Religions," 21.

[196] Khazanov, "World Religions," 11–15; Bentley, *Old World*, 7–8; Golden, "Qipchaqs," 227.

[197] The distinction between the three different mechanisms of conversion: (1) through political and social pressures; (2) through voluntary association; and (3) through acculturation is based on Bentley, *Old World*, 5–20, esp. 7–8, although he used the term assimilation whereas I prefer acculturation.

[198] Ibn Naṭīf, *Ta'rīkh*, fol. 136b.

[199] See nn. 86, 95; Sa'dī, *Bustān*, in *Kuliyyat-i Sa'dī* (Tehran, 1941), 171 for an undated episode describing ascetics in Khotan. The period of the Qara Khitai corresponds with the alleged lifetime of Aḥmad Yasawī (d. ca. 1166), the founder of the Yasawiyya order, which is famous for its Turkic character and for its inclusion of Shamanist and Buddhist elements. Yet since Yasawī's life story is shrouded in legend and as I have not found any references to him or to his disciples in the sources I have read, I have not treated this subject here. For Yasawī see F. Iz, "Aḥmad Yasawī," *EI2* 1 (1960), 298–9; J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders of Islam* (Oxford, 1971), 58–60; E. Esin, *A History of Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Turkish Culture* (Istanbul, 1980), 195–200, though his description of the Qara Khitai is far from being credible. Prof. Devin DeWeese, who is currently preparing a comprehensive study on Yasawī, informed me that the Yasawīan literature contained no specific references to the Qara Khitai (personal communication).

the multi-religious character of the empire, the relatively short time of their rule and their adherence to the Liao–Chinese tradition did not favor acculturation, the affinities between the Qara Khitai and the nomadic Turks, who were partially Muslims, certainly facilitated it. In this context the evidence of Wugusun Zhongduan is revealing: Wugusun was a Jin envoy who in 1220 came to Transoxania to offer Chinggis Khan a peace agreement with the Jurchens. In his travelogue Wugusun gave a short history of the Qara Khitai which he ended with the note that "now there are only few of them left, and their dress is like that of the Muslims (*Huihe*)".[200] The problem with Wugusun's observation is its undefined origin: it is unclear whether the information relates to Transoxania, where he met Chinggis Khan, or to the more eastern regions as well.[201]

Some rather indirect evidence of religious syncretism, which often leads to acculturation, before the collapse of the Qara Khitai can be gleaned from legal sources. *Kitāb al-siyar*,[202] part of Qāḍī Khan's legal work which he composed in late twelfth-century Farghāna, discusses, among other issues, the question of whom Muslims are allowed to take captive in *dār al-ḥarb*. Qāḍī Khan insisted that they were allowed to capture those who fasted and read the Qur'ān but also worshiped idols or venerated their kings.[203] Qāḍī Khan may not have treated those syncretics as Muslims,[204] but what is important to us here is the evidence that people used Muslim rites together with their own, which facilitated their subsequent Islamization. In a later section entitled "What makes an infidel a Muslim," Qāḍī Khan stresses the ease of the conversion of a polytheist to Islam: he had only to admit one part of the *shahāda*, i.e., either that there is no God but God, or that Muḥammad is the messenger of God (thereby contradicting his above-quoted statement), while the requirements for non-Muslim monotheists were higher.[205] Indeed, the conversion of Baraq Ḥājib, the founder of the Kirmānid Qara Khitai dynasty, is mentioned

[200] *BSJ*, 5692; tr. in Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 1:28. The term *Huihe*, which I translated as Muslim, can mean either Muslim or Uighur. In this travelogue it usually refers to Muslim or Central Asian in general (WF, 670).

[201] Wugusun, coming from the southern route via the Tangut border and the Tarim basin, did not pass through Balāsāghūn. Going through the Chu valley a few decades later, Carpini reported that he had met Qara Khitai who were, like the Naiman, full nomads. (Dawson [ed.], *Mission*, 60, and see p. 135).

[202] Literally "The book of military expedition," i.e., the part of a legal work which deals with Muslim relations with non-Muslim nations. For a discussion of the meaning of *siyar* see Khadduri, *Law of Nations*, 39–40.

[203] Qāḍī Khān, *Fatāwā*, 1:585. Even if those legal discussions began before Qāḍī Khan's time, it is still significant that he chose to reproduce them in his book. See also the variant in "al-Dhakhīra al-Burhāniyya", compiled by the Burhānid ṣadr Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz Burhān al-Dīn (d. 1214), MS Princeton Yahudah 1047, vol. 4, fol. 6b.

[204] See the similar arguments used by Ibn Taymiyya to condemn the Islam of the Ilkhans (Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū' fatāwā* [Cairo, 1911], 280–98).

[205] Qāḍī Khān, *Fatāwā*, 1:592–95. This discussion is certainly not original. For the different conditions of conversion for different religious groups see Y. Friedmann, "Conditions of Conversion in Early Islam," forthcoming.



only in passing in contemporary sources, if at all.[206] This suggests that it did not mean a great change in his way of life or even that the Islamization of individual Qara Khitai was not a rare phenomenon *after* the collapse of their empire.

While the Qara Khitai of Kirmān adopted Islam voluntarily and individual Qara Khitais were sold as mamluks and therefore had to convert,[207] most of the Qara Khitai joined the Mongols and there is no definite evidence about their religious affiliation thereafter.

Islam did not manage to conquer the Qara Khitai as it did other nomads in Central Asia. This was partly because of their relatively short period of rule and the religious pluralism of their empire, but mostly due to the Chinese–Liao tradition they adhered to. This tradition fulfilled the same functions that Islam provided other nomads with: communal identity, means of statehood and legitimization.

[206] The two Muslim chronicles devoted to the Kirmānids, Kirmānī's *Simṭ al-'ulā* and the anonymous *Ta'rīkh-i shāhī-i Qarā Khitā'iyyān*, ignore the issue completely, and represent the Qara Khitai of Kirmān as well-established Muslims. Jūzjānī reports that when Baraq went out to Kirmān he was "a newly converted Muslim" (Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 1:314–15); Juwaynī and Waṣṣāf only say that after consolidating his position in Kirmān and killing Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh, Baraq sent a message to the Caliph, informing him that he had embraced Islam and asking for the title of Sultan (Juwaynī, 2:212, tr. Boyle, 476; Waṣṣāf, *Ta'rīkh*, 287; Ayātī, *Taḥrīr-i ta'rīkh-i Waṣṣāf* [Tehran, 1967], 175; cf. Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 24; Nasawī, *Sīra*, 174; *Majma' al-ansāb*, 115; Banākatī, *Rawḍa ūlā al-albāb fī ma'rifat al-tawārīkh wa'l-ansāb [Ta'rīkh Banākatī]* [Tehran, 1969], 211–12, 240, 377, which do not mention Baraq's Islamization at all.

[207] Jūzjānī/Ḥabībī, 2:9, 13, 28.

# Conclusion

When I traveled west more than ten thousand *li*,
Who could have dreamed it was so good a plan![1]

The Qara Khitai established an empire in Central Asia that for the first time joined the worlds of China, the Inner Asian nomads and Islam. Because the Mongol empire, which eventually conquered China, the Eurasian steppe, the Rus principalities and significant parts of the Islamic world succeeded the Qara Khitai in Central Asia, they were seen as a prototype for the Chinggisids. My reconstruction of Qara Khitai history, however, suggests that this is a questionable assumption.

Indeed, both the Qara Khitai and the Mongol empires were multi-ethnic and multilingual empires in which a nomadic minority, backed by a strong army, ruled over heterogeneous populations. Yet even a superficial comparison shows that the differences between the two are more striking than the similarities. Unlike those of the Mongols, the Qara Khitai conquests were not accompanied by a massive devastation of the subjugated territories. Their empire also encompassed a much more limited territory. Moreover, although the Mongols were aware of some elements of Chinese culture through their relations with the Jin,[2] Chinese tradition was a marginal aspect of their legitimization before the rise of Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–94) and the founding of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Instead, during the era of the *Yeke Mongghol Ulus*, the period of unified Mongol empire (1206–60), and for decades afterwards, the Mongols stressed the Chinggisid universalistic ideology of world dominion.[3]

These dissimilarities derive from the different backgrounds of the two peoples, and they certainly influenced the internal organization of the two empires and their relations with their subject populations. The non-destructive conquest of the

[1] Yelü Chucai writing in Samarqand in the 1220s: YLCC-*ZR*, 6/114; Schlepp, "Ye-lü Ch'u-ts'ai," 11.
[2] Franke, "State," 94–5.
[3] Even if the Mongols borrowed their universalistic ideology from the Chinese concept of the Mandate of Heaven, they never displayed it as a Chinese ideology, but rather as a Mongol one. For the connection of the Mongol ideology to former nomadic traditions, mainly of the Turkic empire (sixth–eighth centuries) see T. T. Allsen, "Spiritual Geography and Political Legitimacy in the Eastern Steppe," in H. Claessen and J. Oosten (eds.), *Ideology and the Early State* (Leiden, 1996), 116–35.





Qara Khitai enabled them to build their administration on the basis of cooperation with the conquered population. They therefore mainly used indirect rule, preserving most of the former order and leadership in their subject territories, and choosing their commissioners so that the latters' religions did not offend the dominant religions of the population they supervised. While in places that surrendered peacefully, or that did not have a developed steppe-oriented bureaucratic tradition, the Mongols also preferred to leave the administrative apparatus intact and govern through local elites – as was done, for example, in Uighuria, Georgia and the Rus principalities[4] – Mongol rule was generally characterized by a more direct administration which created a new order rather than preserving a previous one. This was partly because in places subdued by force the conquest itself often eliminated local rulers and elites, thereby limiting Mongol administrative options. Moreover, the Mongols were justly suspicious of the local populations, whose willingness to cooperate with the conquerors was undercut by the brutal treatment they had experienced. In places such as north China and Central Asia, the Mongols developed a direct administration, employing foreign specialists from various religious and ethnic backgrounds, alongside local officials. This often resulted in more local opposition – as is apparent, for example, in the northern Chinese opposition to its Muslim tax-collectors under Ögödei and Möngke.[5] Therefore, even while the Mongols originally borrowed the Qara Khitai institution of the *shihna* (*basqaq*, *darughachi*), these officers' relations with the local population were, as suggested in this study, rather different under the two regimes.

Mongol devastation of conquered territories and the fear it engendered were no doubt major reasons for the unprecedented scale of the Mongol conquests,[6] which in turn is another important difference between the Mongols and the Qara Khitai. Unlike the Qara Khitai, whose borders hardly expanded after 1141, the Mongol empire was built on continuous expansion, clearly apparent until 1260 and in some khanates even later on. This meant, for example, that the Mongol army was not salaried, like the Qara Khitai one, but relied mainly on booty. The unprecedented scale of the Mongol empire also meant that the Mongols encountered other administrative traditions apart from that of the Qara Khitai, which were also influential in the shaping of their empire. Moreover, the demand for fresh troops for their ongoing conquest, combined with the need to neutralize a potentially hostile population or with other imperial needs, led the Mongols to practice large-scale mobilization of the population within their realm. This process was much more significant than the modest precedents of transfer practiced under the Liao or the Qara Khitai. The mobilization initiated by the Mongols accelerated political and ethnic changes,

[4] T. T. Allsen, "The Mongols and North Caucasia," *AEMA* 7 (1987–91), 29; T. T. Allsen, "Technologies of Governance in the Mongolian Empire: A Geographical Survey," paper given at the MIASU Symposium on Inner Asian Statecraft and Technologies of Governance, Cambridge, March 18–19, 2004.
[5] See, e.g., Buell, "Sino-Khitan administration," *passim*; Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 4–10; Allsen, "The Rise," 380–1, 408–9.
[6] Morgan, *Mongols*, 93.

and resulted in a much greater amount of cross-cultural contacts throughout Eurasia.[7]

In terms of cross-cultural contacts, the Qara Khitai period might have set a certain precedent for the Mongol period, although both the nature of the sources and the huge shadow the Mongols cast on their predecessors make it hard to evaluate the degree of cross-cultural contacts under the Qara Khitai. Yet the importance of the image of China in Central Asia, on the one hand, and the continued expansion of Islam, on the other, attest to the continuation of cross-cultural contacts along the Silk Road before and throughout the Qara Khitai period, and on quite a significant scale. Some aspects of cross-cultural relations, which are well documented for the Mongol period – such as Chinese influence on Muslim arts and sciences,[8] the influence of Central Asian Turks on the Mongols,[9] or the developed trade between eastern and western Asia[10] – may well have had their beginnings under the Qara Khitai. Certainly the important role of female rulers in the thirteenth century, usually ascribed to the Mongol influence,[11] has Qara Khitan roots. A study which will take into account both the many newly unearthed archaeological finds, especially from Liao China, and the religious literature of Muslim Central Asia, much of it still in manuscripts, could in the future shed further light on cross-cultural contacts in the tenth–twelfth centuries[12] and, therefore, on the background of the *Pax Mongolica*. Yet, whatever the outcome of such studies, it is obvious that the scale of contacts under the unified rule of the Mongols was significantly greater than that under the Qara Khitai, and this quantitative difference resulted in a qualitative one as well.

Moreover, the vast Mongol polity was a universalistic empire, quite different from the regional empire of the Qara Khitai, and this has implications for their respective ideologies. The Mongols' notion of world dominion is now well known and carefully studied.[13] The Mongols believed that they had been chosen by Heaven to dominate the whole world, and their military successes further bolstered this claim. The Qara Khitai, coming from China and retaining its imperial tradition even in Central Asia, presumably held a similar tradition, namely the right of the mandate holder to rule All Under Heaven (*Tianxia*). Certainly the title Gürkhan (universal Khan) implied universal leadership. However, in China the pretension to universal rule was usually more formal than practical. This was especially apparent

[7] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 4–10, 15–16.
[8] See, e.g., K. Jahn, "Some Ideas of Rashid al-Din on Chinese Culture," *CAJ* 28 (1984), 161–76; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, *passim*.
[9] See, e.g., P. D. Buell, "The Mongol Empire and Turkicization: The Evidence of Food and Foodways," in D. O. Morgan and R. Amitai-Preiss (eds.), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1998), 200–23.
[10] See, e.g., Allsen, *Commodity*, *passim*.
[11] Mernissi, *Forgotten Queens*, 99.
[12] See Biran, "Qarakhanid Studies," 82–4.
[13] See R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid war against the Mamluks," in D. O. Morgan and R. Amitai-Preiss (eds.), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1998), 57–72, and the references on p. 62, n. 20; also P. Jackson, "World Conquest and Local Accommodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy," paper given at the MIASU symposium on Inner Asian Statecraft and Technologies of Governance, Cambridge, March 18–19, 2004.



with the rise of the Liao, when the Chinese recognized the coexistence of "Two Sons of Heaven," the Liao emperor in the north and the Song emperor in the south. From 1005 a strict boundary existed between those two presumably universal empires.[14] Unlike the Mongols, the Liao (and the Song) were therefore quite aware of the practical limitations of their dominion.[15] This pragmatism was maintained also by the Qara Khitai, despite their universalistic titulature. The limited ambitions of the Qara Khitai helped to reduce conflict between them and the Muslims since on this level there was no real competition between the Qara Khitai and the Muslim Caliphate. This of course is in strong contrast to Mongol unwillingness to accept alternatives to their universal rule, either from the Caliph or from the Jin and Song Sons of Heaven. When the Mongol empire disintegrated, its successor states usually turned to local tradition to strengthen their legitimization (Chinese in China, Muslim in Iran), although the Chinggisid ideology still had much value. The only partial parallel to the Qara Khitai situation, in which a foreign tradition was used for gaining legitimization, was in the Golden Horde, whose rulers remained nomads and Muslims unlike their mostly sedentary, Christian subject population.[16]

Another channel through which the influence of the Qara Khitai on the Mongols can be examined is by locating the careers of individual Qara Khitai in the ranks of the Mongol empire and its successor states. This task is complicated by the confusion of the terms "Khitans" and "Qara Khitai" in the different sources.[17] Yet several general observations can be suggested at this stage.

First, the Qara Khitai did not figure prominently among the different ethnic groups active under the Mongols. Although there are a few examples, namely Chin Temür, the Qara Khitai (or Önggüd) who served as the Mongol's *basqaq* of Khurāsān and Māzandarān in the 1220s[18] and Ismā'īl, the non-ethnic Qara Khitai *basqaq* who became a *darughachi* in north China,[19] the activities of other people, mainly "eastern" Khitans, Uighurs and Khwārazmians, in the Mongol ranks are much better documented.[20] However, many of the Central Asians who became influential under Mongol rule (especially in north China, about which the information is more ample), such as Uighurs, Khwārazmians, Naimans and Qarluqs, were former subjects of the Qara Khitai.[21] The Mongols most likely

[14] See introduction, p. 14.
[15] The clearest example of this was in 947, when, three months after conquering the then Chinese capital of Kaifeng and taking the reign title of *Datong* ("Great Unity"), which publicly announced his intention to rule all of north China, Liao Taizong withdrew from Kaifeng, establishing the Khitans' border in the Beijing region, in order to avoid the need to govern a hostile Chinese population that vastly outnumbered them. Twitchett and Tietze, "The Liao," 73–4.
[16] See, e.g., C. J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington, 1987), *passim*; yet the Golden Horde Muslim tradition was not indigenous, but a new development originating only after the Mongol conquest, unlike the Qara Khitai who brought their Chinese–Liao tradition to Central Asia with them.
[17] See appendix 1.
[18] See p. 145.
[19] *YS*, 120/2696, see pp. 112 and 126.
[20] See I. de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *JESHO* 9 (1966), 88–144; I. de Rachewiltz, "Turks in China under the Mongols: A Preliminary Investigation of Turco-Mongol Relations in the 13th and 14th Centuries," in M. Rossabi (ed.), *China among Equals* (Berkeley, 1983), 281–310; Endicott-West, *Mongolian rule*, 65–88.
[21] De Rachewiltz, "Turks"; de Rachewiltz, "Personnel," 88–104.

benefited from the fact that these men were accustomed to serving nomadic, eastern overlords. The Central Asians' functioning in China may also have been facilitated by their exposure to Chinese traditions, and perhaps language, during the Qara Khitai period.

Second, the sweeping changes the Mongol empire inflicted on Inner Asian peoples left their mark on the Qara Khitai as well. Most of the Qara Khitai (just like the "eastern" Khitans) did not retain their ethnic identity after Mongol rule, but were either assimilated in the sedentary civilization surrounding them or absorbed by the Mongol or Turkic populations. A study of the far-reaching ethnic changes of the Inner Asian peoples under the Mongols still awaits detailed exploration.[22] Yet in the case of the Qara Khitai, important contributing factors for this process were not only the loss of their political framework, but also the destruction of the Chinese regimes before the Mongol onslaught. The present study has stressed the role of political power in determining the orientation of nomadic acculturation. The decline in China's position undoubtedly caused the Qara Khitai to underscore the nomadic component in their identity, thereby bringing them closer to the Turks and Mongols.

To sum up, the Qara Khitai were not a prototype for the Mongol empire. The Qara Khitai tendency was consciously to maintain much of the old order that preceded them, keeping a delicate balance between different forms of legitimacy, ecology and religious beliefs; their benign conquest and their limited expansionist and universalistic aspirations sharply contrast with the situation under the Mongol empire. The Mongols did not try to find or retain a balance; they destroyed it. Armed with a truly universalistic ideology and on the basis of their unprecedented devastation, scale and mobilization, the Mongols created a new Eurasian order, and the Qara Khitai were only one, albeit important, factor, which built the background for the Chinggisid enterprise.[23] Yet the Qara Khitai certainly contributed to the consolidation of the Mongol empire. They did so by supplying precedents of nomadic rule over mixed populations as well as a certain amount of soldiers and administrative personnel. More specifically, the Qara Khitai also narrowed the gap between the methods of government in Central Asia and in China, thereby facilitating Mongol ability to borrow traditions and personnel from both directions.

The unprecedented scale of the Mongol empire, the devastation of their initial conquests, their extensive demands for human and natural resources and their administrative policies resulted in major changes in the way of life of their subject populations. Because of such changes, the Mongol period is justly described as

[22] See the instructive observations of Allsen in his "Ever Closer Encounters," 16–18; also Golden, "I Will Give the People"; M. Biran, "Mongols, Muslims and Chinese: Khitan States after the Mongol Conquest," paper read at the International Conference of Mongol–Yuan Studies, Nanjing University, PR China, August 12–14, 2002; M. Biran, "From Mongols to Chinese: Khitans in Yuan China," paper read at the International Symposium on Nomadic and Sedentary People in Past and Present, Universities of Halle-Wittenberg and Leipzig, Wittenberg, November 27–29, 2003.

[23] See M. Biran, "The Mongol Transformation: From the Steppe to Eurasian Empire," *Medieval Encounters* 10, 1–3 (2004), 338–61.



the watershed of Inner Asian history and even world history.[24] The Qara Khitai, for their part, are far more comparable to other regional empires of Inner Asian origin, whose rulers were forced into flight by a superior military power. Leaving their homelands, these fugitives often ended up creating new and viable polities in their new environment as, for instance, in the case of the Saljūqs in Iran and Iraq (1040–1194) and the Moghuls in India (1526–1858).

Saljūq and his family escaped from their lord, the Oghuz Yabghu (or the Khazar Khaqan), thereby arriving at Jand on the fringes of the Muslim world. Unlike the Qara Khitai, the Saljūqs lacked an imperial tradition or prestigious genealogy, and they therefore chose to accommodate the new Muslim environment and adopt its religion and values, participating in the wars and raids of the Muslim *ghāzīs* against the "pagan Turks." Their new religion proved extremely useful as the Saljūqs were drawn into the Samanid–Qarakhanid–Ghaznawid struggle for dominion of Muslim Central Asia, and as they gradually advanced from the Islamic frontiers to its center, Baghdad, where their leader placed himself as Sultan, nominal defender of the 'Abbāsid Caliphs. While the Saljūqs retained elements of their Turkic tradition, their rule was first and foremost a Muslim one, in accordance with the dominant religion of the majority of their subjects. Their future expansion was for the most part directed toward the heartland of the Muslim world or, continuing the *ghāzī* tradition, toward Byzantium on its western fringes. When they reappeared in Central Asia in the late eleventh century as the Qarakhanids' overlords, they came as Sultans of the Muslim world, with administration based on Sāmānid models and a slave-soldier army, now quite detached from their former (and humble) steppe origins.[25]

Much more applicable to the Qara Khitai case is the Moghul example. Babur and his heirs were forced to migrate into India after the Uzbeks took over their homeland, Transoxania. In India they found themselves ruling as an ethnic and religious minority over an heterogeneous but mainly Hindu population, in a terrain very different from that of Central Asia. The Moghuls brought to India their prestigious identity of Timurid (and Chinggisid) Muslim rulers. Like the Qara Khitai, they continued to use this multi-faceted cultural capital even in the new environment, retaining it as a major part of their legitimization. Just as the Qara Khitai retained Liao legitimization symbols such as reign titles or Chinese imperial tradition, so the Moghuls continued the Timurid legitimization techniques, such as historiography, monumental building and promoting the personal appeal of the ruler. At least some of these techniques impressed the Moghuls' non-Muslim and non-Turkic subjects, and were certainly useful in the Moghuls' relations with neighboring Muslim empires. Like the Qara Khitai, the Moghuls practiced broad religious tolerance (at least until Aurangzeb's reign). They allowed non-Muslims to take important posts in their administration and army, used the economic prosperity they created to enhance their popularity, and adopted certain local Indian

[24] See, e.g., N. Di Cosmo, "State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History," *Journal of World History* 10 (1999), 5–6.

[25] See, e.g. Morgan, *Medieval Persia*, 25–50; Golden, "The Karakhanids," 362 ff.

traditions. The Moghuls also retained a strong nostalgia for their original homeland, which resulted in several futile attempts to re-conquer it, the last of them in 1646, more than a century after their arrival in India and despite their fabled military successes there.[26]

The different age, terrain and warfare technique enabled the Moghuls to produce a political entity very different from that of the Qara Khitai: a much more centralistic, bureaucratic, long-lasting – and well-documented – empire, which can be defined as post-nomadic (as opposed to the nomadic Qara Khitai).[27] Yet in both cases, the fugitives continued to adhere to their original imperial past, which, combined with a certain accommodation to local traditions, proved to be a highly efficient tool for consolidating a multicultural, viable and legitimate empire in their new domains.

This brings us back to the Qara Khitai and their empire. In 1124, aspiring to restore the Liao in its former domains, but fully aware of his inability to confront the Jurchens, Yelü Dashi decided to go westward. After six years in western Mongolia, however, the Jurchens had grown even stronger. Due to his fear of a Jurchen attack, his awareness of the limited resources of Kedun and his need to reward his newly acquired followers, Yelü Dashi decided to continue further westward, into Central Asia. Further encouraged by the political fragmentation of Central Asia, the prestige of the Liao in the region and the presence of earlier Khitan immigrants there, Dashi left Mongolia in 1130. The transition of the Khitans in the following decade from fugitives to rulers of the Qara Khitai or Western Liao empire, whose territory roughly equaled that of the Jin and the Song, owes much to Yelü Dashi's political and military genius.

Enthroned at Emil in 1131/2, after taking advantage of the dissolution of the Jurchen force that was sent against him, which he portrayed as a great victory, Yelü Dashi fully utilized his dual titulature as Gürkhan and Chinese emperor. Cleverly manipulating the complex political situation in Central Asia, he managed to attract many nomads to his side, and built a disciplined and coordinated army. With this army he extended his authority over other regions of Central Asia, accomplishing his greatest triumph in 1141 when he vanquished the previously invincible Sultan Sanjar at Qatwān, and acquired the rich province of Transoxania. Yelü Dashi created a workable balance between nomads and sedentaries within his realm, and made full use of the tools of centralization at his disposal, namely the elevated position of the Gürkhan-emperor and his right to nominate a successor. He also wisely refused to allocate appanages to his followers. He therefore left his heirs a stable empire that existed for more than seventy years after Qatwān.

[26] For the Moghuls see, e.g., J. F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (*The New Cambridge History of India*, vol. 1, part 5) (Cambridge, 1993); J. F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir," in J. F. Richards (ed.), *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, 1978), 252–85; R. Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* (Karachi and Oxford, 1998); J. Gommans, *Mughal Warfare* (New York, 2002), esp. 179–86.

[27] For the notion of post-nomadic states see A. Wink, "Conclusion," in A. M. Khazanov and A. Wink (eds.), *Nomads in the Sedentary World* (Richmond, 2001), 285–95.



The institutional strengths could not, however, stop the rise of decentralizing tendencies towards the end of the dynasty, nor could they compensate for a decline in the level of leadership. The decline of the Gürkhan's authority was apparent in Zhilugu's reign (1178–1211). Zhilugu ascended the throne after a major scandal, in which his aunt, Empress Chengtian, was executed by her father-in-law due to an illicit love affair. Therefore, from the very beginning of his rule Zhilugu had to defend his position against his manipulative relatives, who also served as his ministers and commanders. The deterioration of the leadership became obvious on the military front. The Qara Khitai suffered unprecedented defeats at the hands of the Muslims (e.g., in 1198 against the Ghūrids) and did not react decisively to challenges to their authority, such as the Khwārazmian occupation of Bukhara and Balkh in the early thirteenth century.

Among the people who exploited the decline in the Gürkhan's authority were his local commissioners. They used it to increase their demands from their subject populations and retained a larger portion of the taxes in their own hands. These practices, which stood in sharp contrast to the former reputation of the Gürkhan's representatives, not only harmed the Gürkhan's ability to reward his troops, but also threatened to alienate him from his subjects. These trends of internal weakness were quickly used by the Khwārazm Shāh, whose ambition to lead the Muslim world was curtailed by his position as the infidels' vassal. Moreover, they coincided with the rise of a new nomadic force on their eastern frontier, the Mongols. Chinggis Khan offered the Central Asian tribes and states an alternative leadership, much as the Qara Khitai themselves had done nearly a century earlier, and several eastern vassals of the Qara Khitai chose to ally with him from 1209 onward.

Furthermore, the repercussions of Chinggis Khan's actions in Mongolia caused many nomads to flee into the Qara Khitai realm, thereby disturbing the balance between nomads and sedentaries and further weakening the central government. Güchülüg's usurpation in 1211 was the culmination of those tendencies, and it also coincided with the loss of Transoxania to the Khwārazm Shāh. Under the disastrous rule of Güchülüg, whose policies were markedly different from those of the previous Gürkhans, the Qara Khitai lost sizable parts of their former territories and a considerable amount of their subjects' original support, and never mounted a serious challenge to the Mongols. With the defeat of Güchülüg, Chinggis Khan's longtime rival, in 1218, the Mongols took over what was left of the Qara Khitai empire.

During most of their reign, however, the Qara Khitai ruled effectively over a population of great diversity, including a substantial Muslim component. Their success, unprecented in many respects, can be attributed to a number of factors. Among them, the dual titulature of Chinese emperors and Gürkhans that the Qara Khitai adopted in Central Asia proved to be highly effective in their multicultural milieu. The aspiration to restore the Liao, the need to preserve its tradition of relative centralism and the distinctive identity of the Khitans vis-à-vis other nomads induced Yelü Dashi and his heirs to maintain the Chinese characteristics of the Qara Khitai even in Central Asia. This was certainly encouraged by the image of China

among the Western Liao Muslim population. In Muslim Central Asia, China, although vaguely known, was associated with notions of grandeur and prestige, and the memory of former Chinese sovereignty was still alive even in the Western Liao westernmost province, Transoxania. Chinese trappings were therefore useful for ruling the heterogenous Western Liao population, despite the fact that the realm of the Qara Khitai was far from China proper and included only few ethnic Chinese.

Moreover, coming from China, the nomadic Qara Khitai were much more aware of the needs of the sedentary population than were other contemporary nomads. This awareness, together with their ability to control the nomads in their realm for most of their rule, resulted in economic prosperity, which certainly contributed to their acceptance as legitimate rulers in Central Asia.

But aside from being Chinese emperors the Qara Khitai were also Gürkhans, allegedly the universal rulers of the nomads. Again, this facet of their legitimization proved useful not only in the eastern part of their empire but also in the west, where most of the rulers were formerly nomadic Turks who ruled over partly Turkicized populations. The consolidation of Qara Khitai rule was further facilitated by the common features they shared with those Central Asian Turks. The Qara Khitai shared social values, such as the important role of warfare in everyday life and the high position of women and merchants. They shared certain aspects of political culture, such as the importance of marriage alliances, the policy of holding subjects as hostages, the practice of hunting as a royal sport, and certain aspects of military organization. Moreover, during their stay in Central Asia the Qara Khitai were further influenced by the local setting, as is apparent in the distinct differences between their administration and army and the parallel institutions of the original Liao. There is no conclusive evidence, for example, for the practice of dual administration or of a multi-capital system under the Qara Khitai. In fact, the main characteristic of their administration was the distinction between the administration of the central territory, under the direct rule of the Qara Khitai, and the administration of the subject territories, which enjoyed a very broad autonomy under their previous leadership. Although most of the administrators' titles were Chinese, Turkic and even Arabo-Persian titles were also used, even in the higher echelons.

In the military sphere, the Qara Khitai army was based on light cavalry. Infantry and heavy cavalry, both important in Liao warfare, were much less significant (if used at all) in the ranks of the Qara Khitai. The main divisions of the Qara Khitai army were not along the *ordu*, tribal and militia lines, as in the Liao case, but between the standing tribal army, under the direct control of the Gürkhan, and the auxiliary armies of the Qara Khitai subjects. Their ready adaptation to local conditions is well exemplified by their use of elephants, which was rare in north China. The difference is apparent, too, in military titles, since neither Gürkhan nor *tayangu*, chief commanders in the Qara Khitai nomenclature, are found in the Liao period.

Despite the adaptation of the Qara Khitai to their new environment, they retained their unique identity. Throughout their rule, and unlike their predecessors and successors in Central Asia, they did not embrace Islam, a key factor in the culture of most of their subjects. This was possible because their dual identity as Chinese and nomads, combined with the broad religious tolerance they gave their subjects, enabled them to gain legitimacy among their Muslim subjects despite their "infidelity." Furthermore, unimpressed by Muslim military power, which they were able to overcome, and less impressed by Muslim material culture because of their close familiarity with Chinese culture, the Qara Khitai themselves were not eager to embrace Islam. This was also because Chinese tradition fulfilled for the Qara Khitai the same functions Islamic tradition rendered for other nomads: communal identity, means of statehood and, as mentioned above, legitimization.



The main significance of the Qara Khitai period is therefore not as a model for the Mongol empire. This study has tried to show that the Qara Khitai deserve to be studied in their own right and on their own terms, since their rule represents a unique period in the history of Central Asia, one that combines the worlds of China, the nomads and Islam.

# Appendices

APPENDIX 1

# The names: Qara Khitai and Western Liao

The multiple names by which the dynasty studied in this work is known in different sources are an indication of its complex culture. The two most common terms, however, which are used in this study as synonyms, are the Western Liao (*Xi Liao*) and the Qara Khitai.

The term Western Liao appears solely in Chinese sources. Its earliest appearance, in the works of Chang Chun and Yelü Chucai, is traced back to the 1220s, and it is by this name that the dynasty is called in the *Liao shi* and in later Chinese scholarship. The name stresses the relationship of the new dynasty to the original Liao dynasty, and emphasizes its more western location, a common fashion of denoting successor dynasties in China.[1] Other popular names denoting this dynasty in Chinese sources (of the Jin, Song and Xi Xia dynasties) include "Dashi" or "the state of Dashi" (or Dashi Linya) *Dashi guo*, *Dashi Linya guo*, all deriving from the name of the dynasty's founder, Yelü Dashi.[2] The adoption of this name may reflect the influence of the Muslim usage of calling a dynasty after its forefather (e.g., 'Abbāsids [Banū 'Abbās], Saljūqs etc.). For the Jin, however, using a name that ignores the continuity between the Qara Khitai and the Liao dynasty implies a much smaller threat to their own legitimacy.

Another set of Chinese names stresses the ethnic origin of the dynasty, which is called Khitans (*Qidan*); the great Khitans (*Da Qidan*); the later Khitans (*Hou Qidan*); the Western Khitans (*Xi Qidan*); Dashi's Khitans (*Dashi Qidan*) or the

[1] See, e.g., the Eastern and Western Zhou or Han dynasties. In the case of the Liao, however, the term Eastern Liao was not used in relation to the Liao kingdom, rather like the relationship between the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and the Southern Ming (1645–61), which claimed to succeed it. A somewhat similar relationship also existed between the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) and the Western Yuan (1206–71), a name given in China to the Mongol empire from the rise of Chinggis Khan to the accession of Qubilai Khan (1260) and the establishment of the Yuan dynasty in China in 1271, and between the former dynasty and the Northern Yuan (1368–88), the dynasty that Yuan remnants established in Mongolia. Unlike the Northern Yuan or Southern Tang, however (and like the Eastern Zhou or Han, of course), the Western Liao is considered by the Chinese medieval historiography to be a legitimate dynasty.

[2] See, e.g., *JS*, 121/2637; Yuan Haowen, *Yishan xiansheng ji*, 1/2a; Yin Zhiping, *Bao guang ji*, 503; *XXSS*, 38/10b.

Black Khitans (*Hei Qidan*).[3] The last term is a literal translation of the term Qara Khitai, the common name for the dynasty in Muslim works. The term Black Khitans or Qara Khitai does not appear in the *Liao shi* or in later works about Liao history,[4] yet it is transcribed in several Chinese works of the thirteenth century onwards, as *Jiala Xitai*, *Hala Jidadai* or *Hala Qida*.[5]

Moreover, recently unearthed inscriptions in the small Khitan script attest that throughout its rule the Liao dynasty has used the name Qara Khitai (*Hala Qidan*) in its Khitan documents (while the dynasty name in Chinese shifted between *Qidan* [Khitans], *Da Liao* [the Great Liao] and *Da Qidan* [the Great Khitans]).[6] This fits with the attribution, noted already by Chen Shu, of the term Qara Khitai to the Eastern Khitans as well in Mongol, Korean and Persian sources of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries.[7] This means that the name Qara Khitai, used by the Khitans in Central Asia as well as by their succession dynasty in Kirmān (1222–1306),[8] was not invented by Yelü Dashi and his heirs but represented a continuation of the Liao tradition.

Two facts, however, remain problematic: First, the name Qara Khitai does not appear in any Muslim source written before the Mongol invasion of the Muslim world in 1218–20. Its earliest occurrence is in the work of Jūzjānī (written ca. 1260). Earlier Muslim sources use mainly the term *Khitā* or *Khiṭā* (i.e., Khitans) to denote the Qara Khitai and the Liao dynasty.[9] The popularity of the term Qara Khitai from the Mongol period onward probably accounts for Rashīd al-Dīn's assertion that the name is of Mongol origin.[10] This later popularity can partly be explained by the fact that from the thirteenth century onward the term *Khitāy* usually refers to north China,[11] i.e., it shifted from a dynastic or ethnic term to a geographical one. This does not clarify, however, why the pre-Mongol Muslim sources never used the term Qara Khitai.

The second remaining problem is the meaning of the adjective Qara/Hala, usually translated as "black," in the term Qara Khitai. The adjective was obviously

[3] Chen Shu, "Hala Qidan shuo," *Lishi yanjiu* 1956/2, 67; also *YS*, 1/6; Zhou Bida, *Feng zhao lu*, 3/9a; *JS*, 94/2807; *BSJ*, 5269; Zhou Zhizhong, *Yi yu zhi*, 1/6.

[4] Chen Shu, "Hala," 73.

[5] Peng Daya and Xu Ting, *Heida shilue* in *Wang Guowei yi shu* (Shanghai, 1983), 21b, 24a (early thirteenth century); Tao Zongyi, *Chuo geng lu*, *CSJC* ed., 1/27 (fourteenth century); *Yuan chao bi shi* (the Chinese version of the Secret History, thirteenth century), 6/26, cited in WF, 625.

[6] Liu Pujiang, "Liao chao guohao kaoshi," *Lishi yanjiu* 2001/6, 30–44; Zhao Zhiwei and Bao Ruijun, "Qidan xiaozi de 'Yelü Zhixian muzhiming' kaoshi," *Minzu yuwen* 2001/3, 34–41; Lu Yinghong and Zhou Feng, "Qidan Xiaozi 'Yelü Dilie muzhiming' kaoshi," *Minzu yuwen* 2000/1, 43–52.

[7] Chen Shu, "Hala," 72–3; See, e.g., Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:234, 236, 327; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Compendium*, 1:64, n. 1; *SHdR*, 1:554; Chông In-ji, *Koryô sa* (Tokyo, 1908–9), 23/343 ff., as cited in WF, 625 n. 69.

[8] See the title of the chronicle devoted to the history of this dynasty, the anonymous *Ta'rīkh-i shāhī-i Qarā Khitā 'yyān*, as well as the terminology used in the second chronicle of this dynasty, Kirmānī's *Simṭ al-'ulā*, 22 ff.

[9] See, e.g., Ibn al-Athīr, index.

[10] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Die Chinageschichte des Rashid al-Din* (Vienna, 1971), fol. 391r, tr. 20; cited in K. Jahn, "Some Ideas," 168–9, n. 19; whence Banākatī, *Rawḍa*, 341.

[11] See, e.g., Rashīd, *Successors*, index.



a prestigious one, as is evident by its use in the Qarakhanid, Liao, Western Liao and Kirmānid titulature, and by its Chinese equivalent (*da*, "great"). In eleventh- and twelfth-century Central Asia, however, its original meaning was already forgotten.[12] Pritsak suggested that Qara, black, stands for the direction north in the Altaic (and Chinese) system of the five elements (and five colors). Since the north signifies the origin of the Turks, it is a prestigious direction.[13] His suggestion was refuted by Doerfer as well as by Wittfogel and Feng,[14] but it makes more sense if the term originated in the "eastern" Khitans, a more northern people than the Qarakhanids. Chen Shu stressed the general importance of the color black to Inner Asian people before and after the Qara Khitai, which is based on its being the color of the (dark) sky, a leading concept in the religious thought of Inner Asia.[15] Yet the color black (unless understood also as *qing*, gray, or the color of the sea) does not figure prominently in Khitan rituals or folklore. In fact, while Qara means black in Turkish and Mongolian, and the term Qara Khitai was certainly understood as the Black Khitans in the Mongol period, we can not even be sure that *Hala* in Khitan originally means black, or only great.

Whatever it meant, and whether the Western Liao themselves used it or not, the names Qara Khitai and Western Liao are those used to denote the dynasty founded by Yelü Dashi from the thirteenth century onward, and I have therefore used it throughout this study.

[12] Kāshgharī only says that there is a story which explains the use of the title by the Qarakhanids, but does not cite the story (Kāshgharī, *Compendium*, 2:246). In the early twelfth century Marwazī suggested that the title Qarakhan originated in the forefather of the Qarakhanids, a black Ethiopian slave, a rather improbable suggestion (Marwazī/Minorsky, 42, tr. 56; cited in Doerfer, *Elemente*, 3:429; WF, 626).

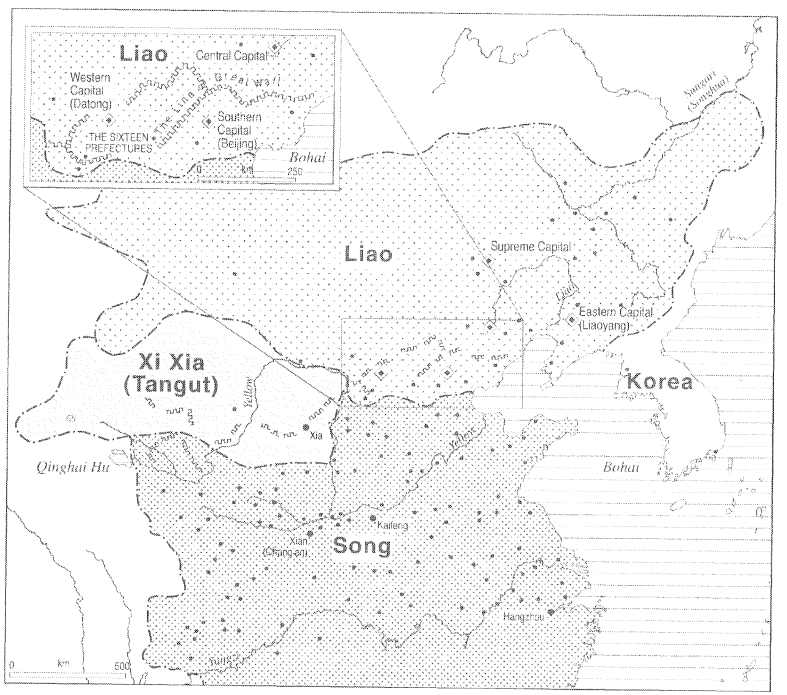
[13] Pritsak, "Qara," 255, 259.

[14] Doerfer, *Elemente*, 3:425; WF, 625, though their assertion that the Qara Khitai took the Qara from the Qarakhanids is refuted by the Khitan inscriptions.

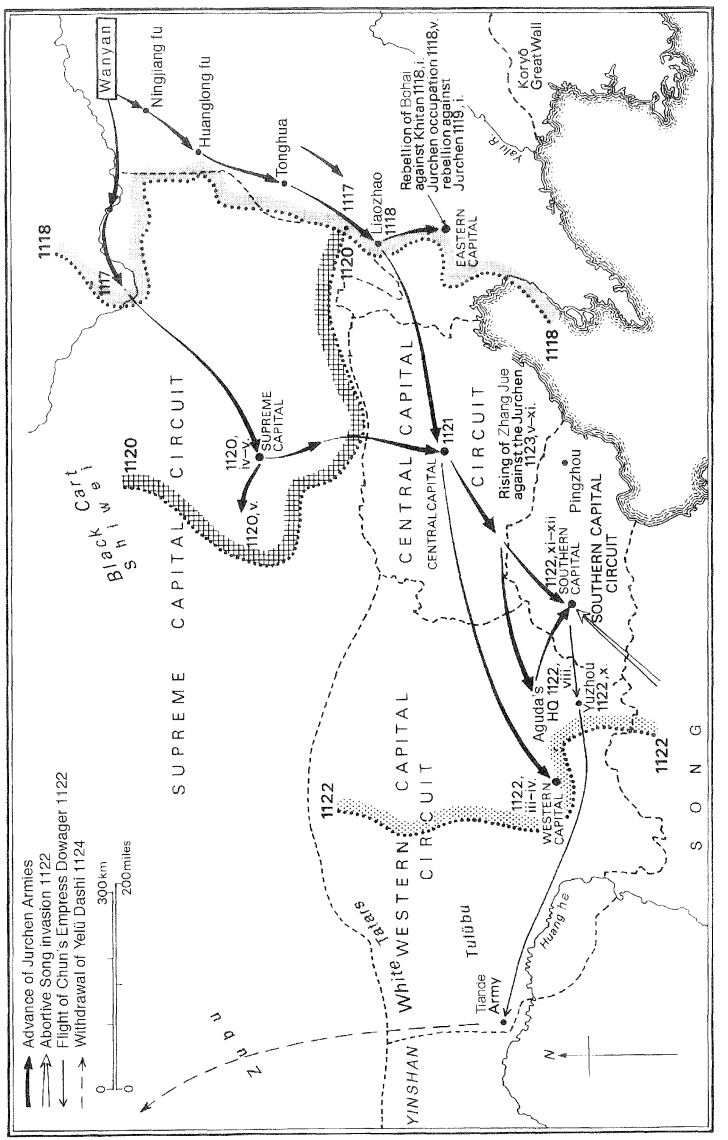
[15] Chen Shu, "Hala," 72–4. Much of Chen Shu's argument is based on the equivalence of black (*hei*) with the less defined color *qing*, the color of the sea, which can be either black, green, blue or gray.

APPENDIX 2

# Maps




Map 1: The Northern Song and Liao empires, ca. 1000 (after J. K. Fairbank, *China: A New History* [Cambridge, MA, 1994], 114)




Map 2: The fall of the Liao and the Jin Invasions (1117–24) (after *CHC6*, 145)

Map 3: Asia ca. 1142: the Qara Khitai (Western Liao) empire (after Tan Qixiang, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* [Shanghai, 1982], 6: 42–3 [with changes])

Map 4: The Qara Khitai empire (1142): internal division

APPENDIX 3

# Tables

## Table 1. Qara Khitai rulers

Table 1a *Genealogy of the Qara Khitai rulers*

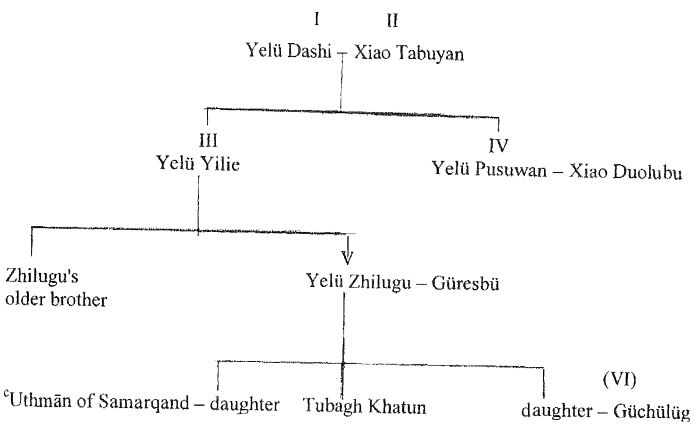







Table 1b *Qara Khitai (Western Liao 西遼) rulers and their reign titles according to* Liao shi *30*

| Name | Temple name | Reign title | Years | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yelü Dashi 耶律大石 | Dezong 德宗 | 1. Yanqing 延慶 (Receiving good luck) 2. Kangguo 康國 (The country pacified) | 1131–3 1134–43 | Known in his lifetime as Tianyou huangdi 天祐黃帝 (Tianyou emperor) |
| Xiao Tabuyan (F) 蕭塔不煙 | Gantian huanghou 感天皇后 (empress Gantian) | Xianqing 咸清 (Completely virtuous) | 1144–50 | In 1131 Dashi conferred upon her the title Zhaode huanghou 昭德皇后 (empress Zhaode) |
| Yelü Yilie 耶律夷列 | Renzong 仁宗 | Shaoxing 紹興 (Continuous flourishing) | 1151–63 | |
| Yelü Pusuwan (F) 耶律普速完 | Chengtian taihou 承天太后 (empress [or mother of emperor] Chengtian) | Chongfu 崇福 (Exalted happiness) | 1164–77 | |
| Yelü Zhilugu 耶律直魯古 | | Tianxi 天禧 (Heavenly blessing) | 1178–1211 | Deposed 1211, retained the title Tai shang huang 太上皇 (emperor emeritus) till his death in 1213. |

All rulers also bore the title Gürkhan and were also called Dashi after their founder.

Table 2 *Central administration titles from* Liao shi *30*

| Title | Translation | Holder | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| *bingma duyuanshuai* 兵馬都元帥 | grand marshal | Xiao Wolila 蕭斡里剌 | Advanced from *liuyuan si da wang*. In Liao time one of the most important command posts in the **northern** administration. |
| *Dongping wang* 東平王 | Prince of Dongping (eastern peace) | Xiao Duolubu 蕭朶魯不 | Honorary title, in Liao times given to people who fought in the eastern front (*LS*, 16/185, 17/205, 80/1281, 81/1284). |
| *dubushu* 都部署 | chief administrator (or tribal chief) | Yelü Yanshan 耶律燕山 | Formerly the *tulu* of the Chachila 茶赤剌 tribe. A very common Liao title (139 references) with many variants, often connected with the capital guard or the tribal army. **Northern and southern** administrations, but **mainly northern** (e.g., *LS*, 45/690, 692, 716, 717, 46/743, 744, 745, 747, 748, 752 [north]; *LS*, 47/795, 796, 797, 48/807 [south]). Sometimes subordinate to the *zhaotao shi*; often in connection with the *dujian*. |
| *dujian* 都監 | director-in-chief | Yelü Tiege 耶律鐵哥 | Advanced from *huwei*. A very common Liao title (122 references), with many variants, mostly connected with the palaces' guards or the tribal army. Often in connection with the *dubushu*; **mostly northern** (one reference in the southern administration: (*LS*, 48/824; for the north, e.g., *LS*, 45/690, 692, 694, 697, 700, 707, 708, 709, 711, 713, 46/723, 730, 734, 736, 743, 745, 746, 752). |
| *fuma* 駙馬 | imperial son-in-law | Xiao Duolubu 蕭朶魯不 (son of Xiao Wolila (*LS*, 30/357); Abensi 阿本斯 (*JS*, 121/2637); perhaps others mentioned in the Muslim sources only by this title. | Nobility title, whose holder often led Qara Khitai army. Güchülüg, who probably held this title as well (though this is nowhere specified) also received from the Gürkhan the honorary title Khan (Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 63). |
| *huwei* 護衛 | officer of the guard; imperial bodyguard | Yelü Tiege 耶律鐵哥 | In Liao period established in the northern and southern divisions of the **northern** administration at the supreme capital; the title often comes with variant attributors (northern, southern, left, right etc.; *LS*, 45/698–9). |
| *liuyuan si da wang* 六院司大王 | great king of the office of the six divisions | Xiao Wolila 蕭斡里剌 | In the Liao time, important post in the **northern** administration, responsible for the six divisions' tribes civil and military affairs; usually held by a Yelü (*LS*, 32/376, 45/707; WF, 665; JZA 1996, 65). |
| *shumi fu shi* 樞密副使 | military affairs vice-commissioner | Xiao Laabu 蕭剌阿不 | In the Liao time, official of the fourth degree in the Chinese *shumi yuan*, 樞密院 **southern** administration. |
| (*dila bu qian*) *tongzhi shumi yuan shi* 敵剌部前同知樞密院事 | associate military affairs commissioner (of the crack troops of the Dila tribe) | Xiao Zhalaabu 蕭查剌阿不 | Probably identical with Xiao Laabu mentioned above. *Tongzhi shumi yuan shi* was an official of the fifth degree in the Chinese *shumi yuan* in Liao **southern** administration. |
| *tulu* (Khitan) 夲魯 | | Yelü Yanshan 耶律燕山 | A post in the tribal administration of the central territory. Perhaps identical with the *tuli* 吐里, an official of the six tribes of the Xi 系 whose functions are not specified. **Northern** administration. In the Jin time the *tuli* was one of the border officials, responsible for pacifying the tribes (*LS*, 46/726, 116/1549; *JS*, 45/1019, 55/1216 etc.). |
| *zhaotao fu shi* 招討副使 | vice bandit suppression commissioner | Yelü Songshan 耶律松山 | Assistant to the next-mentioned office. Much less common (13 references). Probably **northern** administration. |
| *zhaotao shi* 招討使 | bandit suppression commissioner | Yelü Zhuxue 耶律朮薛 | Ad-hoc appointee to bring order in a disrupted area. In the Liao time, one of the border officials in the western border, the northwestern and the southwestern circuits. **Northern** administration. Often leading border campaigns (*LS*, 46/747, 748, 751 and 122 more references !!). |

Table 3 *Other central administration titles of the Qara Khitai*

| Title | Translation | Holder | Source | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *basiha* 八思哈 (*basqaq*) | commissioner, city governor (Turkic) | Yisimaili (Ismāʿīl) 易思麥里 | *YS*, 120/2969–70 | A post in the local administration of the central government; equivalent of *shiḥna* mentioned below. |
| *jinshi* 近侍 | personal attendant | Yisimaili (Ismāʿīl) 易思麥里 | *YS*, 120/2969–70 | Later the *basqaq* of Kashan. In the Liao time, an office of the personal attendants (*jinshi ju*) 近侍局 was included in the officialdom of the imperial tent in the **northern** administration. The *jinshi* was the second out of three officials (*LS*, 45/698). |
| *shiḥna* | commissioner, city governor (Arabic-Persian) | unnamed | E.g., Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 356. | A post in the local administration of the central territory; equivalent of *basqaq* mentioned above. |
| *tayangu* | chamberlain (Turkic) | Shamur Tayangu; Ḥamīd Pūr; Tayangu of Talas, known only by this title (perhaps identical to one of the other two mentioned). | E.g., ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*,101; Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 74–5, 322, 349–50; Jūzjānī/ Ḥabībī, 2:95; Kirmānī, *Simṭ al-ʿulā*, 22 etc. | Perhaps held together with one of the Chinese titles recorded in table 1; No known precedent in Liao times. |
| *vizier* | chief minister (Arabic-Persian) | Maḥmūd Tai | Juwaynī, tr. Boyle, 357–8 | |
| *xiang* 相 | grand councilor (prime minister) | grandfather of Li Shichang | YLCC-*ZR*, 7/153 | In the text the character xiang appears as a verb – to serve as grand councilor (prime minister).Apparent in Liao **northern and southern** administration with several different qualifications (northern, southern, left, right, etc.: *LS*, 45/710, 47/774). |
| *zhi zheng* 執政 | vice grand councilor (assistant to prime minister [*fu-xiang*]) | Li Shichang 李世昌 | YLCC-*ZR*, 2/32 | Also bore the honorary title *junwang* 君王 (lord, prince of second degree: YLCC-*ZR*, 7/153, 8/171); called *zhongshu* 中書, perhaps an abridgment of *zhongshuling* 中書令, secretariat director, important post in Liao **southern** administration, but the title is only poetically used according to YLCC's remark (YLCC-*ZR*, 8/171; WF, 665; cf. *XLSG*, 66). |

Offices without specific titles:
1.Tutor for the Qara Khitai princes: The Uighur *Qara Jighach Buiruk (Hala Yihachi Beilu 哈剌亦哈赤北魯) (*YS*, 124/ 3046).
2. Court doctor and Tayangu's panegyrist: the judge Shams al-Dīn Manṣur b. Maḥmūd al-Uzgandī (ʿAwfī, *Lubāb*, 155–6).



## Dynastic tables

*The Qara Khitai of Kirmān (1222–1307)*[1]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1222–1235 | Barāq Ḥājib |
| 1236 | Muḥammad b. Ḥamīd Pūr, Quṭb al-Dīn, first reign |
| 1236–1252 | Mubārak b. Barāq, Rukn al-Dīn |
| 1252–1257 | Muḥammad b. Ḥamīd Pūr, Quṭb al-Dīn, second reign |
| 1257–1282 | Qutlugh Terken |
| 1282–1292 | Soyurghatmish b. Muḥammad (killed 1294) |
| 1292–1296 | Pādshāh Khatun bt. Qutlugh Terken |
| 1296–1304 | Muḥammad Shāh Sulṭān b. Ḥajjāj Sulṭān |
| 1304–1305 | Shāh Jahān b. Soyurghatmish (deposed 1305) |
| 1306 | Mongol governor appointed. |

*The Khwārazm Shāhs (1077–1231)*[2]

| | |
|---|---|
| 1097–1127 | Arslan Tigin Muḥammad b. Anūshtigin |
| 1127–1156 | Atsïz b. Muḥammad |
| 1156–1172 | Il Arslan b. Atsïz |
| 1172–1200 | Tekish b. Il Arslan |
| 1172–1201 | Sulṭān Shāh b. Il Arslan, rival ruler in Khurāsān, d. 1193 |
| 1200–1220 | Muḥammad b. Tekish |
| 1220–1231 | Jalāl al-Dīn *Mingtirinī |

*The Qarakhanid rulers of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries*[3]

The Western Qarakhanids

| | |
|---|---|
| | Muḥammad b. Sulaymān (495/1102–524/1130, from 523/1129 with his son Aḥmad) |
| | Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (523/1129–524/1130, with his father) |
| | al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (524/1130–before 530/1135–6) |
| | Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad (before 530/1135–6–536/1141) |
| | Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad (536/1141–551/1156) |
| | Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥusayn (551/1156–553/1158) |
| | ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan (553/1158–556/1160–1) |
| | Masʿūd b. al-Ḥasan (556/1160–1–566/1170–1) |

[1] After C. E. Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual (Edinburgh, 1996), 210.
[2] After Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, 178–9.
[3] After Kochnev, *Karakhanidskie monety*, 30–33; Kochnev, "Chronologie," 64–6.

al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (rebel of non-Qarakhanid origin; 561/1155–6–562/1156–7?)
Muḥammad b. Masʿūd (566/1170–1–574/1178–9)
ʿAbd al-Khāliq b. Ḥusayn (574/1178–9?)
Ibrāhim b. al-Ḥusayn (574/1178–9–599/1202–3)
ʿUthmān b. Ibrāhīm (599/1202–3–609/1212)

The Eastern Qarakhanids

Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan (496/1102–3–between 522/1128 and 535/1140)
Ibrāhim b. Aḥmad (between 522/1128 and 535/1140–ca. 553/1157–8)
Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (ca. 553/1157–8–ca. 575/1179–80)
Yūsuf b. Muḥammad (ca. 575/1179–80–601/1205)
[Muḥammad b. Yūsuf (d. 1211)]

The Qarakhanids of Farghāna

al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan (ca. 531/1137–551/1156)
Ibrāhim b. al-Ḥusayn (551/1156?–574/1178–9)
Aḥmad b. Ibrāhim (574/1178–9–607/1210–11)
Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad (607/1210–11–609/1212–13)

*The Ghūrids*[4]

| | |
|---|---|
| after 1059–1100 | Muḥammad b. ʿAbbās |
| 1100–1146 | Ḥusayn I b. Ḥasan |
| 1146–1149 | Sūrī b. Ḥusayn I |
| 1149 | Sām b. Ḥusayn , Bahāʾ al-Dīn |
| 1149–1161 | Ḥusayn II b. Ḥusayn I |
| 1161–1163 | Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn II |
| 1163–1203 | Muḥammad b. Sām I Bahāʾ al-Dīn, Ghiyāth al-Dīn, supreme ruler in Fīrūzgūh |
| [1173–1203 | Muḥammad b. Sām I, Shihāb al-Dīn, ruler in Ghazna] |
| 1203–1206 | Muḥammad b. Sām I, Shihāb al-Dīn, supreme Sulṭān in Ghūr and India |
| 1206–1212 | Maḥmūd b. Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Ghiyāth al-Dīn |
| 1212–1213 | Sām II b. Maḥmūd, Bahāʾ al-Dīn |
| 1213–1214 | Atsīz b. Ḥusayn II, Khwārazmian vassal |
| 1213–1215 | Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, Khwārazmian vassal |
| 1215 | Khwārazmian conquest |

[4] After Bosworth, *The New Islamic Dynasties*, 298.



*Liao emperors and their reign titles*[5]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Taizu (907–6) | | |
| | Shenci | 916 |
| | Tiancan | 922–6 |
| | Tianxian | 926 |
| Taizong (927–47) | Tianxian | 926–38 |
| | Huitong | 938–47 |
| | Datong | 947 |
| Shizong (947–51) | Tianlu | 947–51 |
| Muzong (951–69) | Yingli | 951–69 |
| Jingzong (969–82) | Baoning | 969–79 |
| Shengzong (982–1031) | Qianheng | 979–83 |
| | Donghe | 982–1012 |
| | Kaitai | 1012–21 |
| | Taiping | 1021–31 |
| Xingzong (1031–55) | Jingfu | 1031–2 |
| | Zhongxi | 1032–55 |
| Daozong (1055–1101) | Qingning | 1055–65 |
| | Xianyong | 1065–75 |
| | Taikang | 1075–85 |
| | Daan | 1085–95 |
| | Shoulong | 1095–1101 |
| Tianzuo (1101–25) | Qiantong | 1101–11 |
| | Tianqing | 1111–21 |
| | Baoda | 1121–25 |
| [Xuanzong [Yelü Chun] (1122) | Jianfu | 1122] |

*Jin emperors and their reign titles*[6]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Taizu (1115–23) | Shouguo | 1115–17 |
| | Tianfu | 1117–23 |
| Taizong (1123–38) | Tianhui | 1123–38 |
| Xizong (1138–50) | Tianjuan | 1138–41 |
| | Huangtong | 1141–50 |
| Hailing Wang (1150–61) | Tiande | 1150–3 |
| | Zhenyuan | 1153–6 |
| | Zhenglong | 1156–61 |
| Shizong (1161–90) | Dading | 1161–90 |

[5] After *CHC6*, xxii.
[6] After *CHC6*, xxvi.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Zhangzong (1190–1209) | Mingchang | 1190–6 |
| | Chengan | 1196–1201 |
| | Taihe | 1201–9 |
| Wei Shao Wang (1209–13) | Daan | 1209–12 |
| | Zhongqing | 1212–13 |
| | Zhining | 1213 |
| Xuanzong (1213–24) | Zhenyu | 1213–17 |
| | Xingding | 1217–22 |
| | Yuanguang | 1222–4 |
| Aizong (1224–34) | Zhengda | 1224–32 |
| | Kaixing | 1232 |
| | Tianxing | 1232–4 |
| Modi (1234) | | 1234 |

APPENDIX 4

# Glossary of Chinese characters

Abaoji 阿保机
Abensi 阿本斯
Aguda 阿骨打
Aibi (river) 爱毕河
An Lushan 安禄山
Anbei duhufu 安北都護府
Anxi 安西

Balisu 拔离速
Basiha 八思哈
Bai Dada 白達達
Baigou (river) 白沟河
Baiguan zhi 百官志
Bei mian 北面
Beiting duhufu 北庭都護府
Bigude 鼻古德
Bingma duyuan shuai 兵馬都元帥
Bohai 渤海

Caixiang 相
Chachila 茶赤剌
Chang De 常德
Chen Daren 陳大任
Chengtian 承天
Chengxiang 承相
Chengzhi 承旨
Chongde 崇德
Chongfu 崇福

Da Qidan 大契丹
Dahuang shiwei 大皇室韋
Dalaguai (Dalagu) 達剌乖 (達剌古)

Dalin 大林
Damili (Damaili) 達密里 (麥里)
Dashi (Muslims) 大食
Dashi (Qara Khitai) 大石
Dashi guo 大石國
Dashi linya 大石林牙
Dashi linya guo 大石林牙國
Dashi ren 大石人
Datong 大同
Dangxiang 党項
Dao (circuit) 道
Dao (The Way) 道
Dening 德寧
Dezong 德宗
Dila (Dilie) 敵剌 (敵烈)
Dilabu qian tongzhi shumi yuan shi 敵剌部前同知樞密院事
Dongping wang 東平王
Dongzhou 東州
Du 都
Dubushu 都部署
Dujian 都監
Dutong 都統

Fan 番
Fang La 方臘
Fengshengzhou 奉聖州
Fengzhou 奉州
Fu 府
Fuma 駙馬

Gansu 甘肅
Gantian 感天
Gantian yuanbao 感天元宝
Gaochang 高昌
Gaozong *see* Song Gaozong
Geerhan (Gürkhan) 葛儿罕
Gugong 故宮
Guo 國
Guowang 國王

Hala Jidadai 哈剌吉答歹
Hala Qida 哈剌乞荅
Hala Yihachi beilu 哈剌亦哈赤北魯



Hailing Wang 海陵王
Han 漢
Haner 漢兒
Hanlin 翰林
Hedong 河東
Hezhong fu 河中府
Hezhou 和州
Hezhu 合主
Hei 黑
Hei Qidan 黑契丹
Hei shui 黑水
Hou Qidan 後契丹
Huersan 忽兒珊
Hugou (river) 滹溝河
Humusi 忽母思
Husi woerduo (Gusi eluduo) 虎思斡耳朵 (骨斯訛魯朵)
Huwei 護衛
Huifan 會番
Huihe 回紇
Huihui 回回
Huizong *see* Song Huizong

Jimi 羈縻
Jia (mountains) 夾山
Jiachen 甲辰
Jiala Qidan 甲辣吸紿
Jiawu 甲午
Jian 監
Jianguo 監國
Jianyan 建炎
Jiangzuo jian 將作監
Jiangzuo shaojian 將作少監
Jiedushi 節度使
Jin (Jurchen dynasty) 金
Jin (one of the Five Dynasties) 晉
Jin (prince of) 晉王
*Jin shi* (book) 金史
Jin Shizong 金世宗
Jin Taizong 金太宗
Jinshi (personal attendant) 近侍
Jinshi (title) 進士
Jinshi ju 近侍局
Jing 京

Jiuerbi 糺而鼻
Juyong guan 居庸關
Junlü 軍旅
Junwang 君王

Kaifeng 開封
Kangguo 康國
Kangguo yuanbao 康國元宝
Kangli 康里
Kangzhou 康州
Kedun 可敦

Lashi 剌史
Langjun 郎君
Langoudian 蘭溝甸
Li 里
Li Chuwen 李處温
Li Shichang 李世昌
Liang (prince of) 梁王
Liao 遼
Liao Daozong 遼道宗
Liao Shenzong 遼神宗
*Liao shi* 遼史
Liaoxing jun 遼興軍
Lin fu lu 麟府路
Linya 林牙
Linya Xiao taishi 林牙蕭太石
Liu yuan si da wang 六院司大王
Longmen 龍門

Mierji 密兒紀
Mobei 漠北

Nabo 捺鉢
Naiman 乃滿
Nan mian 南面
Nila 尼剌
Nian Han 粘罕
Nian hao 年號
Nianbaen 粘拔恩
Niange Hannu 粘割韓奴
Ningxia 寧夏



Polikuo 坡里括
Polongdun 婆隆敦
Pusuwan (empress) 普速完
Pusuwan (tribe) 普速完

Qidan 契丹
Qierman 起兒漫
Qin (prince of) 秦王
Qingzhong **青塚**
Qu Duan 曲端
Quchulü (Güchülüg) 屈出律
Quanzhen 全真

Saba 撒八
Shaanxi 陝西
Shali 沙里
Shanyuan 澶淵
Shaofu jian 少府監
Shaojian 少監
Shaoxing 紹興
Shi Jianu 石家奴
Shilu 實錄
Shiwei 室韋
Shoujun 守軍
Shumi fushi 樞密副使
Shumi yuan 樞密院
Shuang liu 雙六
Sichuan 四川
Song 宋
Song Gaozong 宋高宗
Song Huizong 宋鑞宗
Song Qinzong 宋欽宗
Sui sha Qidan suozhi jian guo shaojian, yu lai yi he 遂殺契丹所置監國少監,欲來義和
Suide 綏德
Suiyuan 隨員

Taifu 太傅
Taifu jian 太府監
Taijian 太監
Taishang huang 太上皇
Taishi 太師
Taishou 太守

Taiwang 太王
Taizhou 泰州
Taizu 太祖
Tang 唐
Tang Suzong 唐肅宗
Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗
Tanggu 唐古
Tian 天
Tiande 天德
Tianxi 天禧
Tianxia 天下
Tianyou 天祐
Tianzi 天子
Tianzuo 天祚
Tiebing 鐵兵
Tongzhi shumi yuan shi 同知樞密院事
Touxia 投下
Touxia junzhou 投下軍州
Tukui **吐渾**
Tuli 吐里
Tulu 吐魯
Tuntian 屯田
Tuo 駝

Wanyan Xiyin 完顏希尹
Wanyan Xiang **完顏襄**
Wang 王
Wang Zao 汪藻
Wangjila 王紀剌
Weidi 僞弟
Weiwu 威武
Weizhou 魏州
Wen Taizu xing shuofang, sui sha Qidan suo zhi jian guo deng guan yu lai fu 聞太祖興朔方遂殺契丹所置監國等官欲來附
Wenji 文集
Wenwu baiguan 文武百官
Wo jin zheng yi er xi 我今仗義而西
Woluduo 窩魯朵
Wu Min 吳敏
Wuchuan 武川
Wugu 烏古
Wuguli 烏古里
Wugusun Zhongduan 吾古孫仲端



Wuguo 五國
Wulu 烏律

Xi 系
Xi Liao 西遼
Xi Xia 西夏
Xinan lu 西南路
Xian 縣
Xianqing 咸清
Xiang 相
Xiangwen 祥穩
Xiangzhou 祥州
Xiao 蕭
Xiao Defei 蕭德妃
Xiao Duolubu 蕭朶魯不
Xiao Gan 蕭幹
Xiao Heda 蕭合達
Xiao Puguzhi 蕭朴古只
Xiao Tabuyan 蕭塔不煙
Xiao Wolila 蕭斡里剌
Xiao Yixie 蕭乙薛
Xibei lu du zhaotaoci 西北路都招討府
Xidi 奚的
Xin 新
Xincheng 新城
Xinjiang 新疆
Xinsigan 辛思干
Xiongnu 匈奴

Yanjing 燕京
Yanqing 延慶
Yanyun 燕雲
Yang Keshi 楊可世
Yaolian 遙輦
Yebu lian 葉不輦
Yelü 耶律
Yelü Abaoji 耶律阿保機
Yelü Ahai 耶律阿海
Yelü Chucai 耶律楚才
Yelü Chun 耶律淳
Yelü Dashi 耶律大石 (大實, 達實)
Yelü Dilie 耶律敵列
Yelü Fuding 耶律佛頂

Yelü Huage 耶律化哥
Yelü Miansige 耶律綿思哥
Yelü Pusuwan 耶律普速完
Yelü Tuhua 耶律禿花
Yelü Wowo (Yila Wowo) 耶律窩斡 (移剌窩斡)
Yelü Yali 耶律雅里
Yelü Yan 耶律儼
Yelü Yilie 耶律夷列
Yelü Yudu 耶律余睹
Yelü Zhilugu 耶律直魯古
Yelü Zhulie 耶律朮烈
Yexi 也喜
Yila 移剌
Yingju 應舉
Yingtian 應天
Yisimaili 易思麥里
Yin (mountains) 陰山
Yin su er zhi, de qi yi yi 因俗而治，得其宜矣
Ying 營
Yongding (river) 永定河
Yuan 元
Yunnei zhou 雲內州
Yunzhong 雲中

Zaixiang 宰相
Zhang Jun 張浚
Zhao Zidi 趙子砥
Zhaode huanghou 昭德皇后
Zhaotao fushi 招討副使
Zhaotao shi 招討使
Zhaozhou 招州
Zhenzhou 鎮州
Zhilugu *see* Yelü Zhilugu
Zhizheng 執政
Zhong Shidao 种師道
Zhongshu 中書
Zhongshu ling 中書令
Zhou 州
Zhuangguer 狀古兒
Zihe 紫河
Zubu 阻卜

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*Note*: The bibliography does not include *EI1*, *EI2* and *EIr* articles. Only the titles of Chinese sources and studies as well as those of a few Arabic and Persian studies have been translated into English.

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